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MY LIFE AND DANCING

By Maud Allan

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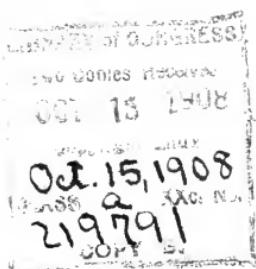


MY LIFE AND DANCING

By MAUD ALLAN



PAUL R. REYNOLDS
1908
NEW YORK



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DEDICATION.

DARLING MOTHER:—

At the last moment I am told that my book requires a Dedication. Of course it does.

This is it,

Your devoted,

MAUD.

London,

September, 1908.



PREFACE.

WHEN first it was suggested to me that I should write this small book it seemed to me to savour of imposing a little on the wonderful kindness with which my work and myself have been received. But when the suggestion was backed up by the advice, almost the demands, of friends in whose judgment I have confidence, my scruples vanished, and I decided *liberare animam meam* to liberate my mind, as the Classic author puts it.

If it should give pleasure to or interest the friends who have appreciated my work, or even bring those who have misunderstood it to a better understanding, and especially if it prove helpful to any young girl whose ambition it is to take up an artistic career, I shall feel most amply rewarded. I shall feel that I was justified in braving criticism on the score of the premature publication of even so brief an outline as this of my life's work.

M. A.



MY LIFE AND DANCING.

CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTORY.

“How came it about that you adopted the classic methods of dance?”

“How did you set about acquiring the art of antique dancing?”

“What gave you the idea of reviving the style of the ancients in your dances?”

These are the earliest questions of the curious critic.

“Her manner of interpreting the emotional phases of music is a revelation.”

“This manner of dancing is a remarkable novelty.”

“She has introduced wonderful innovations in the art of dancing!”

These are the pronouncements of the kindly and courteous critic.

They are wrong—wrong—wrong.

How I dance, and why, and what is my intention in my dance no one can say. I, least of all, for as I think and breathe and live, so I dance, and as for method, a searching cry from one of the wood-wind instruments in the orchestra—a deeper sigh from the violincellos, a sudden impulsive throb from the great bass, or a warning muffled note from the horns, and what I have to express as I dance above them on the stage, changes, as a chance word said in a new tone in a conversation alters the whole tenour of the talk. Many who have watched me time after time have asked me why I can never dance to the same measure twice in exactly the same manner—I cannot answer, I only know that as the music calls, so every muscular fibre that responds to the beating of my heart, responds to that particular voice, and the tone becomes movement.

A novelty—an innovation? No, indeed!

When first I came to London, one of my earliest friends, a critic who was perhaps more poet than critic, and perhaps more seer than either, said to me: "You danced, I think, in Syracusan groves, and on the slopes of Mount Etna, for the pleasure of Dorian and Ionian immigrants, when Sicily was a peaceful colony of ancient Greece. You danced whilst Theocritus read his idylls in the Mediterranean twilights, and then you went to sleep—and have wakened again just now. But you have not forgotten how you danced to the wailing and the laughter of Sicilian flutes and to the command of Sicilian tabors."

I wonder!

I think I can see the boats from Argolis seven hundred years before Christ landing their companies upon the Trinacrian sands. I can skip five hundred years, and stand in the theatre at Taormina, as it was then, listening to the tired voice of Theocritus, himself a settler upon those whispering shores, reciting the Idyll, compelling my limbs to sway to the music of his thought, whilst the chorus took up the burden of his tale. And then the Carthaginian wars, the struggle for our Island, the purple splendours and brutalities of the Roman Triumph. The Sicily of Theocritus was crushed, its groves were hushed and dead, and I—I think they laid me in a little niche beside a stream under the hedges of cactus and the geraniums stained by the sun-rise—and I waited—waited!

Syracuse in Sicily, B. C.210, London in England, A.D. 1908.

What a wild fancy! and yet—I do sometimes think that I was one with those ancient dancers, whose duty in life was to express in motion the hopes, fears, passions, regrets, which rose in men's and women's hearts, and found expression in movement when the world was younger, and simpler, and more accustomed to what Carlyle has called "all sorts of sudden sincerities."

How much I remember, how much I have read—and forgotten—how much I have dreamed of those earliest dancers. I hardly know. But let me set it down with the help of a few old writers who noted these things at the time, by way of introduction to my egotistical little book.

The origin of dancing is panoplied with the dim magnificence of Myth. "We are not to believe," says Lucian in a

well known dialogue, "that dancing is of modern invention, born recently, or even that our ancestors saw its beginning. Those who have spoken with truth of the origin of this art affirm that it takes its birth from the time of the creation of all things, and that it is as old as Love, the most ancient of the gods." Cybele herself, daughter of the Earth and Sky, wife of Saturn, and mother of the gods, taught the art of dancing to the Corybantes on Mount Ida and to the Curetes in Crete, and among the servants of the Pantheon her priests were called Ballatores—the Dancers—and the dance of the Curetes was said to be that of Daedalus, engraved, as Homer tells us in the Iliad, upon the shields of Achilles.

When the cloud-curtains of mythology are raised and historic times begin, we hear first of all of the Hieratic dances of Egypt, and find representations of them upon Egyptian monuments from 2500 to 1200 B.C. These dances interpreted the Music of the Spheres and the Harmonic progression of the Stars. We have representations of the dances in honour of Apis the Bull, the Diodorus Siculus (that tender master of Chronicles) tells us that Osiris was served by nine maidens skilled in all arts that relate to musical expression, who came to be called by the Greeks the "Nine Muses." You have in your midst, on the tablets and vases from Thebes in the British Museum, pictures of the dances that accompanied their funerals and festivals, and modern travellers in Egypt may see in the dances of the Gazawis—the dance of "the Bee," and of "the Bottle"—the survival of the very modes depicted upon those ancient decorations.

Born in Egypt, the Dance became nurtured in the cradle of the Arts—Greece—and I love to see in imagination the Nine Muses, led by Terpischore, as they were seen by Hesiod treading, in their beautiful measures, the violets of Hippocrene. And in other moods my mind conjures up the Bacchantes encircling Silenus with their riot of spontaneous movement. We have it from Aristotle that, in dancing, all the passions of man found illustration three hundred years before the Augustan era, and no Athenian festivity was shorn of this art which Simonides aptly described as "silent poetry."

If proof were wanting of the importance that the Greeks attached to dancing, it may be found throughout the pages

of Plato's "Republic," where it is prescribed as one of the principal branches of education. We remember the dances that Homer describes at the banquets in the *Odyssey*—if you would have them brought more vividly before you, spend an hour among the exquisite figures from Tanagra and Myrina, in the British Museum, and in the Galleries of the Louvre.

A learned and enthusiastic student and professor of the art, Mons. Desrats, in his "Dictionnaire de la Danse" (Paris, 1896), has given us a wonderful study of these early Greek dances. It is not for me to attempt an elaborate description of them in this place, but some of the principal dances may be evoked by the most cursory description. The *Emmeleia*, which are referred to by Plato, and which were in the nature of sacred and tragic invocations to the gods. The *Hyporchema*, religious dances, accompanied by a singing chorus, which were executed in honour originally of Apollo, and later of Dionysos and Athene. The exquisite *Gymnopædia*, simulating an attack and defence, danced by naked boys crowned with chaplets of palm, and the *Endymatia*, which were more secular dances, characterised by brisker action, and executed by performers clad in the richest draperies.

From these four all the dances of antiquity took their derivation, and among them what more idyllic than that known as *Caryatis*, the dance sacred to Diana, danced by noble Spartan maidens in the woods near Caryæ. It was the Dance of Innocence, danced naked around the altars of the goddess, the maidens carrying upon their heads baskets containing the materials and implements proper to the sacrifice, and their chaste rites have been immortalised in our modern architecture by the pillars that are known to us as *Caryatides*.

The Virgin Goddess claimed, too, the dance known as *Cnossia*, a dance executed by girls in chaplets of flowers, and youths girt with golden swords and bearing golden shields; it was a war-like measure representing the labyrinth of the Minotaur at Cnossus. To her also was sacred the Purple Dance, so called from the colour of the tunics in which it was executed. Sparta, again, was the home of another dance sacred to Diana, the *Hormos*, a kind of farandole instituted by Lycurgus to inculcate in the youths and maidens who danced it without draperies, the fearless mod-

esty which was the boast of the Spartan national character. Even in such early days there were those in whom nudity in woman awoke base thoughts, to whom Lycurgus replied (Plutarch being his historiographer), "I wish them to perform the same exercises as men, that they may equal men in strength, health, virtue and generosity of soul, and that they may learn to despise the opinion of the vulgar."

The youth of Greece were, as we have seen, educated to the dance with a view to the exercise and training of their muscles. Chief among their exercises were the Pyrrhic and the Memphitic dances, which were military in their character, and of which we find countless representations upon Greek and Etruscan vases and mural paintings. The Pyrrhic dance, which has been described in turn by Xenophon and Apuleius, was danced principally at the festival of the Panathenæ in honour of Minerva. Later, we learn, the reed and the thyrsus took the place of the weapons of war, and the dance degenerated into a Bacchic revel. The Memphitic dance was equally warlike in its origin, but was danced to the music of flutes. It was at this period in the history of dancing that its evolutions took on the earliest elements of pantomime, the invention of which is attributed by Cassiodorus to one Philistion, but it must not be imagined that pantomime was tinged at this time with the buffoneries which were later its leading characteristic, and which led to its ultimate degradation. The best pantomimists were called Ethologues, meaning "painters of manners," and their performances were known as Hypotheses, meaning "moralities."

All these early writers are, to some extent, vague and contradictory in their accounts, but I have chosen for record only the clearest descriptions that have come down to us.

On the Greek stage, the Hyporchematic dances reached their highest developments of music, dance and statuesque poses, and they were directed by a leader who punctuated the measures with the click of oyster-shells, a practice that finds its parallel in the use of the modern castanets.

It is not surprising that with the intrusion of pantomime and of the comic element the dances degenerated, and we read of the Cordax (named after Cordax, the satyr), which was an indecent buffoonery, for the dancing of which Theophrastus reproaches a man who danced it when sober.

The dance known as Sikinnis was of even baser sort, and the Kolia was little other than the twitching of the body muscles that has its modern equivalent in the *Danse du Ventre* of the latter day Almées and Gazawis. The names of a vast number of these mimetic dances have been handed down to us by historians of classic manners and customs, and Mons. Vuillier, in his "*Histoire de la Danse*," gives a list of them, the titles of which sufficiently indicate their nature.

But contemporary and co-existent with these were many very beautiful dances peculiar to women, representations of which have charmed us all as we see them depicted in the mural paintings of Pompeii and Herculaneum. Such were the Hygra, the Kallabis, and the Oklasma, exquisite and graceful measures danced to the music of single and double flutes. Would that I could go back in dreams to see a Greek maiden dancing the flower dance that was known as Anthema!

But the Greeks were not the only pupils of the ancient Egyptian dancers. The Hebrews during the time of the Egyptian captivity, without doubt, learnt much of this art from their task-masters, and one might easily quote a vast number of passages from the Old Testament having reference to the dances of the Israelites. "Praise Him with timbrel and with dance" commands the Psalmist, and the dance of King David before the Ark requires but passing mention. The pitiful episode of Jephtha's daughter springs to one's mind, and we learn that the daughters of Shiloh were dancing when the sons of Benjamin descended upon them, as the Romans upon the Sabine women. There were dances in honour of Judith when she returned bearing the head of Holofernes, probably a kind of "country dance" danced by two rows of girls.

I can hardly leave this part of my subject without referring to the Dance of Salomé, though I have devoted a later chapter to it. What this dance actually may have been it is difficult to conjecture, but most authorities agree that it must have been one of the strongly dramatic representations of human passion, which found expression then, as it does now, in mimetic dance. One of the older versions of the New Testament records that she "vaulted." and this has given the

impression that her dance was acrobatic rather than graceful, and perhaps more curious than polite. Indeed, there is a well known miniature from a manuscript of the fourteenth century in which *Salomé* is represented as dancing on her hands, with her feet in the air. I can only hope and believe, as students of the middle ages believe, that the painter was merely inspired by the recollection of the mountebanks who visited English and Continental fairs in the dawn of manners, with whom this particular feat was a favourite illustration of their skill.

We must next trace the History of the Art in Rome, and while doing so, it must be borne in mind that Rome was still in a condition of barbarism when the civilisation of Greece was almost at its zenith. Passing over the war-dance called *Bellicrepa*, said to have been invented by Romulus to celebrate the Rape of the Sabines; the earliest account we have of Roman dancing is that of the *Salii*, twelve priests appointed by the pacific Numa Pompilius to celebrate the gods in ceremonial and warlike dances. It was not long, however, before the Romans adopted the arts of Greece, as it had already adopted its gods, and we may take it that the Greek methods of dancing found a ready acceptance, and that dancing in Rome speedily attained a development that fell not far short of the Greek originals. It is not surprising, regard being had to the nature and origin of the Roman people, that what was bad in the art of dancing, soon gained a firm foothold, and that the art rapidly reached the condition of degeneracy which it attained by slower degrees in Greece. Scipo Emilius records his visit to a school where noble children were educated, and where "a boy of twelve performed a dance worthy of the most degraded slave." The *Bacchanalia*, originally of a religious and ceremonial character, soon became corrupted into mere orgies; the *Lupercalia*, dances in honour of the god Pan, shared the same fate, and it may be said that, until the Augustan era, dancing as a distinct art was confined to Tuscan buffoons. It was, however, a condition of affairs that led insensibly to a high development of the art of pantomime, which at the dawn of the Augustan age had become the mania, the rage of the Roman populace. The *Ludiones* of the rival pantomimists, *Bathyllus* and *Pygades*, divided the city into factions, and men and women alike

view with one another in their adhesion to, and patronage (to the point of imitation) of, these rival leaders. Cicero and Horace both stigmatised dancing as an infamous practice, and we have it on record that Sallust reproached a Roman lady with the taunt that "she danced with too much skill for a virtuous woman." The most famous female dancers in Rome were the Gaditanians, a class of women who came from Cadiz, and, so great was their renown, that we find their eulogies in the works of Martial, Pliny, Petronius, Apian and Strabo. The "Gaditanian Delights," as they were called, may be said to have been the earliest prime ballerine in the history of the art.

The power of dancing as a means of appealing to the feelings of the populace did not escape the Fathers of the Early Christian Church, and many accounts have come down to us by way of reference to the Ritual dances of that Church. As early as 744 A.D. these dances were forbidden by a decree of Pope Zacharias. In the 12th century religious dances were banned by Bishop Odo of Paris, and they were again interdicted by a decree of Parliament in 1667, but the clergy, in whose hands was the sale of licenses to institute these functions, did all in their power to resist and set at nought the decrees. Such dances still obtain upon anniversary festivals to-day in many Continental cities, especially in Spain, and the religious dances at Limoges in honour of St. Martial are a notable case in point. The dancing Dervishes of the East afford another instance of a survival of the kind.

Purely secular dancing of the earlier classic kind appears to have enjoyed a revival amongst the early Gauls, but it was of a debased type, and we find it forbidden in the year 554 by Childebert. With the birth of chivalry in the early middle ages we note the real renaissance of the dance, and it is easy to trace the influence and traditions of the early Greek School in the Rondes, Bourés and Branles of Auvergne, and the Minuets and Farandoles of Languedoc and elsewhere in the South of France, where the popular dances of the country people differ little to-day from those that were danced a thousand years ago. These were the dances of the Provinces. At Court, dancing had developed into Masquerades, and from thence to the Ballet was an easy and natural step. At one of the earliest of these (still known as the "Ballet des Ardents")

Charles VI., being present, dressed as a savage, his costume caught fire, and he suffered a shock that brought about his madness.

Theatrical dancing, as we know it to-day, had its origin in Italy, where, at the end of the 15th century, Cardinal Riario, nephew of the Pope, composed Ballets and had them performed by his own company in the Castle of St. Angelo. In Italy the Medicis revived the dances of ancient Greece and Rome. The art flourished in the 16th and 17th centuries, and side by side with the stately Pavanes and Courantes, associated with the names of Louis XIII., Richlieu and Henry IV., we have the contrasting pictures of the Dances of Death that owed their existence to Albert Durer and Holbein.

The apogee of the Art of Dancing was reached in the reign of Louis XIV., who founded the Académie de la Danse in 1661 with Quinault as director, and J. B. Lully as composer. It was not, however, until 1681 that women dancers appeared again upon the stage, and we have an account of the performance at this time of four ladies in a Ballet entitled "Le Triomphe de l' Amour." Dancing continued to be more and more elegant and refined during the reigns of Louis XV. and XVI., when the Gavotte and Minuet recalled some of the stately graces of old times. But suddenly the end came, the music was silenced, the lights extinguished, and in the place of the elegant dances in the palaces, men and women ran riot in the streets, dancing—dancing madly.

It was the Carmagnole, the dance of the Revolution!

* * *

The exaggerated classic revival that took place at the time of the Directoire brought back with it a theatrical resurrection of some of the classic modes, but they died out again, giving place to the modern style which dates from 1830.

* * *

In the foregoing short sketch of the History of Classical Dancing, I have tried to show, within the restricted limits to which I am necessarily confined, that in all ages in which dancing properly so-called has flourished, it has been, not so much the aim as the natural condition of the Art, to express the nature, the characteristics, the emotions of those who have pursued it. Nations dance—when they dance naturally

—to the tune of their destinies. The moment that dancing becomes bound by rules and conventions it loses the very rationale of its existence. Who then shall say that true dancing can be taught? As well might we try to teach the birds to sing, the butterflies to soar, by rote and measure among the glades and the flowers.

It was not with taught precision of scholastic methods, it was not in ambition to realise perfection in a given mode, that we danced in the shady groves and sunlit meads of Argolis, or by the murmuring seas of the Sicily of Theocritus.

CHAPTER II.

CHILDHOOD.

It is so refreshing and delightful to rest awhile—to take a minute now and then to hark back to my first memories—to close my eyes and just imagine that I am the little Maud of other days, with my dollies as my constant companions.

As I write I have in my mind my first doll-baby—a china baby, with stiff little yellow-tinted china ringlets, blue eyes and a tiny rosebud mouth. Her hands and feet, too, were china, and I did love her so. She came to me when I was only five months' old, and then and there I named her Minnie, so they tell me. Her baby years, too, were not without adventure and excitement, she being once almost burned to death in the oven of the great kitchen stove, and only rescued by chance when the big, fat, good-natured cook was about to put glorious big, round plum cake into the oven to bake. Another time my baby fell. She had been climbing about after the fashion of her tiny mother over chair and table, and so lost her balance and down she went. I found the poor dear lying unconscious on the floor, with her arms and legs broken. Could a mother imagine anything more dreadful? I ran to reecue her, but while tenderly lifting the poor little body, the sawdust streamed to the floor. I dropped her as quickly. I ran screaming to mother. "Oh, my dolly is blooding!" I was not to be comforted till I saw poor china baby taken to the hospital to get well. And so she was, and came home with rosy cheeks and new hands and feet too! This time, though, of wood, and so pretty they were, although not quite so white as the limbs of old; but mamma assured me they were ever so much stronger, so I was satisfied and delighted to have my baby back again.

All this while we were growing older and wiser, and soon the advent of a great big beautiful wax baby, with "real" golden curls—the kind we can comb just as mothers comb their babies' curls—put poor little old-fashioned Minnie's nose out of joint. They got along wonderfully well together,

but I noticed how Minnie grew more reserved and self-sacrificing, till at last she would do anything in the thought of pleasing her new sister. But now the dears are mouldering away their dolls' lives in the bottom of an old trunk; their useful days are over, and their noses smudgy and flattened.

I imagine the mother of a real live baby has something of the same feeling that a small girl has for a well-beloved doll. Minnie came to me in Canada, and, as I have already said, when I was five months' old, in the first home that I can remember. How curiously a child's mind retains some impressions!

While nearly everything else has faded from my memory about my Canadian home, I have a vivid recollection of the old base burner in the hall-way, the clear isinglass windows of which gave out the fire brightly on winter nights. From this same stove came my first intimate acquaintance with Santa Claus, and Minnie fell from the pack on his back through the front door of that stove.

I remember Santa Claus—dear old merry Santa Claus! How a child's heart bounds with expectation and joy at the nearing of Christmastide, with the clanging of joy bells, the hurry and bustle of the "grown-ups" with their grand air of secret-keeping! And then Santa Claus! One hears the tinkling bells of his merry steeds far away over the snowy hill tops, the crack of the long whip as he fairly flies in his haste to visit all the good and loving little tots waiting his coming. I remember it was Christmas Eve. I had been told again the story and meaning of the hour, and, too, of the long white-bearded Santa Claus who loved us and would on this night deliver gifts rejoicing with us all.

We were tucked away in our little cots, my dollies and I, but not before we had taken the longest stockings we could find and hung them up at the open fireplace so that Santa would not have far to go to fill them with precious goodies. But we couldn't sleep, so busy were we thinking of good Santa and the desire burning within us to see him.

It was still and dark about us, and we waited. Soon we heard something. "Tis Santa! Come quick!" Away we sped down the broad staircase. By the big base burner was an enormous basket loaded with strange things, and little mother, hearing the pitter-patter of the little feet, peeped

around the corner to warn us not to come near, as Santa Claus was there, and had said he would stop till the morning if we would now run back to our dreamland nook and be patient.

And Santa did stop, and Santa caught me in his arms and let me fondle his long snowy beard and play with the white locks which hung to his shoulders, and ride in the now empty sack on his back and play with the beautiful whip that had fired his air ponies on in order that he might come to visit me!

Shall I ever forget? Never, if I live to be a thousand!

My baby heart, too, loved and lived in fairy-tales. Even now I revel in them, and nothing is sweeter than to let myself be carried off to mystic lands and mingle with the dear fairies.

I remember clearly the first time I heard of the "Babes in the Wood." I remember, too, going off and covering myself with the leaves that had fallen from the trees in the great garden.

Another delight was—although I was but four years old—to stand up in the big swing and "work up" till the ropes were at right angles with the tall piles supporting them. Of course, this was to the great distress of my nurse and mother, but I loved it. The excitement seemed good to me, and I would grip the rope tighter and wish I could fly as high as the birches.

Another recollection, still as clear as though it had happened but yesterday, is that of burning my right forefinger. I carry the scar to-day, but it was the first real showing of my interest in life, in that I wanted to find out everything for myself. Mamma said the stove was hot, and it would burn me, and the burn would pain, if I should touch it. But curiosity was uppermost in my little brain, and I wondered and wondered if it could possibly be that to touch the hot stove meant pain! It did look so pretty,—red, bright, brilliant, glowing red in spots—and I touched it.

A pleasure unbounded for all children in northern countries is the snow. Glorious piles of white, sparkling snow will hold the attention of the most capricious youngsters for hours. Oft have we coasted in our pretty sleigh with our great Newfoundland dog as leader, down the great hills of snow, and

oft through one little side step of the knowing and fun-loving animal were we thrown at the bottom into great drifts, till only our feet were exposed to tell the tale. Oftimes my mother thought she had lost her baby-girl in the great pile of whiteness. Rover stood by and laughed, yes, till his conscience pricked him and he would pretend to gather us all up again, and then tear up the hill in a hurry to begin all over again. What a pity such companions cannot talk!

Then I remember being taken by my parents—and my dollies taken by me—and together with our governess we turned our faces towards California. And then, in that beautiful State of roses and sunshine, I received my first real life lessons.

Speaking of my journey from Canada to San Francisco brings to my remembrance one peculiar incident that will ever remain as one of my vivid childish recollections. The train stopped at a way side station, and most of the passengers alighted to obtain glimpses of the many Indians who haunted the place to sell their wares. I don't think my mother once thought of any danger to me, but suddenly she missed me, just as the train was pulling out of the station. There was a hurried search, but I was nowhere to be found. Instantly the conductor pulled back to the platform, and there, running off towards the woods with a glint of flaxen hair under her arm discernible from the edge of the red blanket, was an Indian squaw with another red woman in her trail. My mother says that it was the vivid colour of my hair flying in the wind that attracted the attention of my friends.

Of course, I was rescued immediately, and soon, babylike, I forgot my fear, and before we were half way to our destination I was making free with my fellow-passengers, as brave as ever. But even to-day I can close my eyes and see the reddish-brown face bending over mine as the Indian woman whipped me up under her arm and started off.

I know that I caused my parents a great deal of uneasiness, for I was not the dreamy sort of a child that so many people think I was, but a romp of a girl with ambitions to climb the highest trees and to see the sun rise from the top of the tallest mountain.

It seemed more natural to me to climb the fence upon entering the garden from school than to go in by the gate. I don't to

this day know why, yet fence-climbing did have a fascination for me. Naturally, too, it brought me many a fall, and serious ones at that, but I seemed never to be convinced of either the impropriety of the act or the danger involved to me and my pretty clothes, although Nurse would talk and scold all the time she mended the horrible rents in pinafore and stockings. I would then try and comfort her, saying, "Never mind, Nursie; there are such heaps of lots prettier stockings and pinnafores in the shops, and we can get some new ones." I valued little the dainty things I used to wear at that time. Later, I allowed my two dear dollies—especially Mabel, because she grew to be such a big, lovely girl—to wear them; and she is laid to rest in the big trunk in the little dress she liked best.

When about seven years old, I was sent to the country for six months. Being rather frail, the orders were to let me run wild. Not that I needed any encouragement! I loved to go barefoot and hatless, chasing the butterflies and making friends with the wild flowers. To be in such perfect contact with Nature was a joy hitherto almost unknown to me, and I was ravished with its delights, and grew and grew. The waving golden corn, the murmuring brooks, the little tumbling waterfalls and the singing of the birds, all delighted me and made me think about what it all meant and why it all was. I came to many conclusions, but the impressions were daily so varied that I often had to change my ideas, and for a time I grew unhappy at not being able to unravel the great mystery. At such moments I would run to the village school, and the headmaster would allow me to sit in a class-room and listen to the instruction. This seemed to help and soothe my brain, and I would go away feeling quite at ease again.

Once at this village school I entered a "spelling match," and kept up almost to the last. Then—how annoyed I was!—I had to take my seat because I missed spelling "unanimous." I thought, as I took my seat—so ashamed—that had the girl before me not missed it too, I was sure I could have kept up, because then the teacher would not have given me, a little girl, as hard a word as he would a big girl!

I pass onward.

The so-called primary classes at school were over, and the grammar grades, with the many enchanting studies, were knock-

ing at the door when we went camping for the first time. I don't think any European knows what real camping-out means, unless he or she has been to America and gone through it. A greater, purer freedom one can never imagine. The charms of early morning berry-picking excursions, etc swimming, mountain-climbing, and the grand bonfire of large six-foot logs piled up in dozens blazing at night, while one swings lazily to and fro in the low-stretched hammocks, are only known to real campers. One can imagine oneself free from every sorrow and care, free from the world's hurry and scurry.

In Green Valley, high up in the Californian mountains, I learned to ride bareback, and at an early age I was keen on both swimming and riding. Though I had a dear little horse for my own special use, I determined to ride the largest one on the farm, and one day mounted it. All went well till, returning, the poor thing suddenly doubled up with pain. I did not know what to do. I could not keep my seat for long at the pace he was going, and the way he was tossing himself, and I was contemplating grabbing the first low tree branch to let him slip from under me when, rounding the hill leading to the out stables, he threw me, and unhappily uphill, for I rolled under his iron-shod hoofs.

I was carried to the house, and for hours lay in a very critical condition, while my poor steed, in spite of all veterinary assistance, breathed his last in the early dawn.

I thought nothing of my own pain when they told me next morning that "Frank" was dead of a frightful colic. I forgave him my injuries. He never would have hurt me had he not been driven mad through suffering.

My little legs were cut from knee to ankle, and I was confined to bed for weeks. Even now the slightest pressure where the gashes were reminds me of those hours of pain. Had it not been for my dear mother, who nursed me day and night, I am sure I never should have got well so soon. Her every touch seemed life-giving and healing.

Many "animal" accidents have befallen me. I have noticed all my life long that dogs seem to like the taste of my flesh, for several times they have bitten pieces out of my legs and arms, I suppose under the impression that I disliked them, when

the fact of the matter is I adore them—when they don't bite me.

Even since growing up I have been bitten once by a dog and another time by a cab horse. The horse episode was ludicrous, although I suppose it is hard to imagine anything funny in a horse trying to eat one up. And now I think of it, I'm supposed to be in the memories of my childhood, but as I've started to write about the horse I will continue to do so.

The horse seemed to be eating quietly out of his leathern pouch, and as I passed under the swinging bag I had no idea of intruding upon him. I suppose I must have hit his dinner-bag, for, before I had straightened my back to stand up, he gave a snort, raised his head, and gripped my arm tightly between his teeth. As it was winter, my furs protected me somewhat, and the teeth did not break the skin. But the pain brought a cry, and the horse freed my arm. The cabman, who was sitting eating his luncheon, scattered his meal to the four winds, crawled out upon his horse's back, and commenced to beat the beast with his fists. I suppose at any other time I would have stopped him, but just at that particular moment I was busy assuring myself that a part of my arm was not left in the horse's mouth.

By this time a crowd of curious people had gathered, and a controversy was in the air when I took my first opportunity of slipping through the crowd and leaving the whole—cabmen, horse, and crowd—behind.

There is a peculiarity about a German crowd (this happened in Berlin) when anything happens. Very soon, without any relation to rhyme or reason, they get into a heated discussion, and the assistance of the sturdy, ever-ready-to-interfere police is often needed to scatter the crowd.

With every recollection of my childhood I call to mind instinctively the picture of my dear home in California. My world in those days was bounded on the west by the beautiful, restless Pacific, while to the north-east lay Canada, which, though my eyes could not see it, I knew was there. The other parts of the world I had yet to see, and I bothered little about them. The great ocean, with its uneven roll of waves and far-tossing foam, left a deep imprint upon my mind. The sound of rushing water ever carried me back again to California, leaving

me on the vast Pacific shores, dancing in the waves with my playmates.

With a view to becoming a pianist by profession, I first made acquaintance with the fearful joys of the piano-lesson when, at a very early age, I was placed in the San Francisco School of Music under the able tuition of Prof. E. S. Bonelli. There I began to learn the preliminaries, and to grind out yards of scales when but five and a half years old. From the very beginning I knew what rhythm meant, for I think it was born in me, but the mystic sounds of Nature have always drawn from me my best both in music and imagery.

It was whilst at this school that I was inspired once to organise a small class to train some children in music. On Saturdays I gathered the tots about me, and very strictly did I assert my authority. My first feeling of elation under the probation of my fellows came when I was a small girl. The baby class did so well under my care and guidance that it was publicly commented upon, and I took to myself some of the printed laurels which were bestowed upon its tiny members.

My work outside my school studies seemed now to be definitely decided upon, although I had marked talent for clay-modelling and wood-carving, to which I had, in spite of my other work, taken a great fancy. I was to become a musician—a pianist of fame—and I read with growing interest and delight Amy Fay's book on her stay in Germany. I read of the grand old masters and the charm that lay in their methods and work, and longed, as an enthusiastic child can long, for the days to come when I too should be bundled off to the fair lands of the Old World with their mystic beauties and wonderful arts.

I dug down in these years into the history of music, and worked hard at the theory of it all. My interest was high and my enthusiasm unbounded.

About this time came the great and glorious Sarah Bernhardt to San Francisco. My ambitious little heart burned within me. She was the one woman in the world I wanted to rival, and I have not lost the feeling yet. So great an artist, and yet so simple and childlike, it is no wonder that every one loves her. I think the turning point in my career came from my first sight of that great woman.

She inspired me to express my thoughts in another man-

ner. I had hitherto used the piano as my medium, but when I played alone in the drawing-room I could feel the call of another art than I had chosen. Once my mother stole in softly and seated herself not far from me. When I had finished she whispered, "Of what is my little girl thinking that she plays like that?"

"Of Sarah Bernhardt's wonderful talent, of the beautiful movements of her body," replied I. "She seems to express more with it than with her lips."

My mother did not understand, so remained silent as I played on and on, never tiring as unconsciously I wove a dance to the theme of the old masters. As a matter of fact, I did not understand myself then. Since, I have often seen Madame Bernhardt in Paris, and always experienced the same curious delight in her performance that I did as a child.

How strange it all is! My mind alternates between my Californian home and these lands over here, and much as I desire that they remain separate for a time, they blend themselves into one great world over which I look with fondest recollections.

Once upon a time, in California—one would think it a fairy tale by the beginning, and so it may be well called—for it has to do with my first fairy prince—I met with my first sentimental experience. I was nine years old, and he nineteen. I sat beside him as he talked gravely upon his student life with all the dignity of his age—I admiring him every minute. Day after day I went out with him, sometimes dancing on before, sometimes clasping his hand in mine. Once, I remember, there was a picnic and it was there I heard my fate. As I bounded along with a pink sunshade, he walking sedately with a basket of cake and sandwiches upon his arm, he said:

"I'm going away soon."

"Where?"

"Back to my college. But when you are quite grown up I shall come again for you."

Day after day for two years I expected to grow up suddenly, and only forgot my student after being assured by my mother that I would not be grown up for many years. As I look back I honestly believe that was my first love affair, and I expect in every girl's life come just such events.

Out of that incident I received an impression that love was comradeship, and meant being good companions with some brave youth. Men seemed designed to help girls over creeks, and to carry the lunch basket and bear burdens, while girls—well, they were made just to be around all the time, to be the sunshine, and to make things livelier.

But this idea was soon to be suddenly dissipated. For some weeks a teacher in the school I attended had dined with us often. Accordingly, he and I walked from the High School building home. Being just fifteen and my dresses lengthened that spring, it gave rise to comments from my girl friends.

One day one of them mysteriously took me into my mother's garden and whispered the news in my ear. She had heard on the best authority that I was going to marry the professor. Going home that evening I said to him quite carelessly:—

"I've heard such a stupid thing. Frances says people are saying that some day you and I are going to be married, like father and mother."

We stood before my home, and he turned upon me suddenly, saying:—

"Well, little girl, what if it were so? What if we should promise each other here and now?"

I didn't wait to hear more. My good comrade had gone, and in his place stood a grave, serious man I greatly disliked at that moment. I stamped my foot, dropped my books in the dust, and in a rage tore around the house and, jumping over the back fence, rushed to a friend's house, and refused to come back until after he had gone.

So much for childish affections and girlish attachments. The last experience knocked all illusions out of my head. But I laugh now as I remember the spiteful manner in which I threw down my books and ran away. I had lost a friend and found a lover, and was not at all pleased with the change.

As I get more and more into the retrospective mood, I find old days crowding so closely upon me that tears make my written words look like the scratches of an old mother-hen digging for her chicks. Well, so am I digging into the depths of memories long since laid by. One of the sweetest happened about my sixteenth birthday; in fact, covered the entire year. I had grown passionately fond of music, and it had long since been

counted my lifework, and, thinking it necessary that every little girl be started in the right way in her first musical days, I gathered about me, for the second time, because I loved them, fifteen or twenty children, and together we studied the preliminaries of music which I had already mastered.

Only a short time ago a friend from California told me that one of these children—she's quite a young lady now—said:—

“I learned so much under ‘Miss Maud.’ I think it was because she was so sympathetic with me, and loved me so well.”

It seemed to be my greatest ambition to have these children learn all I had learned. I worked hours with them when other girls would have been playing, and they never seemed anxious to pack up their books to go, but ever ready with new questions.

At the end of each month I examined them just as in real school, and although we were all children together, they were as proud and anxious to earn my praise as if I had been a stern professor.

I have only the highest words of praise for my father and mother in that they kept me so diligently at studies I needed outside my music. It is not considered necessary by many parents to press a girl into ordinary studies, such as history, mathematics and the like, if it has been decided the child should follow an artistic career. But if mothers knew how it broadens and expands naturally bright minds to dig into the experiences of great men's lives, which can only be done through books, they would not only help and advise but would insist and command. The living often gain a vast amount of aid in the minutest and most personal things from the dead, especially from the study of historical literature.

That is why I would implore young people entering upon a vocation of art to have a firm foundation upon which to build before starting out. It is the same as when one builds a beautiful home. No man with common sense would erect a mansion upon a foundation of sand. So no girl with high ambitions can enter into a glorious life of art without the knowledge of the world as it is revealed in books. Travel only adds to that knowledge and enhances it, broadening and making the character of the girl more fitted for her life-work. Just

how much gratitude a girl owes to her parents if they are judicious and well balanced she will never realise until she compares a well-rounded career, a full and varied life, with that of the ordinary artist who has nothing but her art for both foundation and coping stone.

I can remember well talking to a very young girl who was by nature a genius. But only this one part of her soul-life had been developed, while all the rest was in a deplorable state of neglect. I knew also another young genius whose natural gift for study had been sacrificed for the art she had chosen. The result was sad indeed. She was like a lopped tree with only one branch left, or a person with but one limb, and the genius which should have been her happiness was but her bane. She had no chance of recreation, for her very soul as well as her mind seemed one-sided, and she became simply a monomaniac on her genius side, while had she been well trained she might have been a charming, interesting and noble woman, and her life's success assured, instead of being as she was—merely another genius who failed.

She said to me:—

“I hate to study books—I simply hate it. Now when I'm working at my piano, then I am happy and most diligent, but the moment I sit down at my books, then my mind wanders and I cannot keep my attention upon what is before me.”

“My dear little girl,” said I, “listen to me. If you would make a success in your piano work,—and remember this is the experience of many who have climbed the difficult path you are on—if your mind wanders from your work, no matter what it is, it shows that it wants disciplining, and for that disease one of the best cures is the study of mathematics, Euclid, and the like. And to arouse ambition you must know what others have done before you. If you receive no impetus from the successes and failures of others, then what a vast amount of energy is lost in the world in preparing for you and me the high example of the life-works of men dead and gone.”

But there! I am giving you a lecture, and I didn't intend to.

Afterwards I discovered that this same small girl was compelled to leave her work and enter a college for beginners before she was able to interpret correctly the minds of the masters

she loved. I suppose I dwell upon this because out of the humdrum days of my school time I received so much.

I learned, when adding up my sums, that the piano keys must be forgotten—that I must not think of the wonders of Beethoven and Chopin. And it is not hard for me to bring out of the storehouse of my mind the exact words my mother used to say to me when I became discouraged. We were great pals, my mother and I. One morning I was in a rage over a problem that I could not solve, and she took me upstairs alone, and there she said:—

“Has my little daughter lost all her splendid ambition?”

“No, indeed! But I would rather play, it’s so much easier.”

“That’s because you like it, Maud dear. And let me tell my girl this, that it is the things in life we don’t want to do that count in the end for us. Remember this—if you aim high, you’ll hit high. If you skid your stone along the ground, it can rise no higher, but thrown into the air it must go somewhere.”

I went meekly back to my sums, and—well, now I am glad I did it!

I grew to love my school, my books, my work. It was a disappointment verging on a sorrow to me if I were compelled to miss one day’s instruction, through illness or other good reason. I felt as though my sun was setting for ever when I left for the last time the school-room, with its dear familiar setting. I would wander down, between that day and the one on which I left for the Old World, time after time, and visit the old haunts. It gave me comfort to take out my books and fondle them. I hated to put them away, but, alas! it had to be, and I delved down into the treasures of my music as only we can when trying to become reconciled to a great sorrow.

From this point on my life began to change. The seriousness of world problems began to take hold of me, and I grew greatly interested in the new trend of things. I had often played in public from the time I was twelve years of age, but now my ambitions seemed to give me no rest. To go abroad and become great filled my heart with a longing not to be stilled. I attended all the concerts of the great artists, and once, although in the afternoon, I had been fearfully bit-

ten by a savage Newfoundland dog, I would not forego the great pleasure of hearing Adèle aus der Ohe play that night.

Her wonderful technique inspired me so that I forgot entirely the painful wound of which I carry the scar to this day, where the great white teeth caught and pierced the flesh. It was days before I could go back to my own scale-playing, but I didn't waste my time. Loaded with Duchesse and La France roses from our own lovely garden, I went to the hotel where this clever artist was staying and made her acquaintance. She seemed to take an interest in me, too, and many instructive and delightful hours were spent with her during her stay in San Francisco.

With renewed courage I went back to my own work when the bandages were removed, and the time sped along, and the day for my parting from my home, my childhood, and my many dear friends came.

CHAPTER III.

MEMORIES.

It was about now, I believe, that my first real inspiration for dancing came to me. I had never received dancing lessons, as most of the little girls I knew had, for my spare time outside of school hours and a little recreation was taken up with my music. Unconsciously, however, I drew from Nature and its rhythm an abiding sense of peace, and when studying my daily lessons under the trees, while others were engrossed in their own affairs, I danced by the brooks and streams with no thought of step, no thought of preconceived rhythms.

It was the poetry of motion in the running brooks and the rhythm of the tossing branches that gave me a desire to express something within me by the grace of motion. And while I did not mention it to my mother, I believed that I could go into the country where the master-minds had lived and worked, that I too could demonstrate in the movements of the body the delight of my favourite composers.

It was never a pleasure to me to watch a ballet. My mother tells me that even as a little child I once asked her why the little angels and fairies in it had such ugly skin and such blunt feet without toes. In the beautiful pictures adorning the walls of the Art Galleries I had always seen fairies and the like, but they looked so beautiful, and at ease. I could see them move when I looked with half closed eyes, and never was there a sharp turning to hurt one's feelings. But at the theatre I saw such ugly ones! They offended my eyes, and when mother said it was not the real skin, but pink fleshings to represent skin, I was greatly annoyed. "That is why it is so ugly then," I said. "Skin never looked like that, and why just 'represent?' Why not be as the beautiful figures in the paintings?"

And twirling on the toe-points in the padded, stiffened, pink satin, formless ballet shoe gave me much to think about. I

had the greatest difficulty in bringing myself even to think kindly of the achievement, for it is certainly an achievement to do such a feat, however un-normal and utterly senseless it may be.

All the light, gay naturalness, the very joy of living, seemed barred from the production. The hearts of these little dancers seemed turned to stone, and fear of the harsh words of the training master and hours of toil seemed the tale told in the hard, stereotyped smile on the little faces. I was unhappy. Many times after I had first seen a ballet I pondered over the question of the truthfulness of such dancing. Was it dancing, as dancing ought to be, and as dancing was originally conceived? I came to the conclusion it was not! To me it was but the rude outgrowth of an art once very beautiful and adored, and to this deformed, brainless child the world was paying homage, and leaving the perfect, beautiful mother to die! I was filled with a longing and a sadness hitherto unknown to me.

When it was decided that I should go to Berlin and take up my studies there, I could hardly wait for the time to come. Yet I dreaded leaving my mother and father, my home and my treasures.

I remember that when it was settled and my brave, courageous mother was blinking back her tears, I said with the egotism of a very young girl—

“Some day, dear, you shall come to me over there, when I have made you proud of your daughter.”

How well I remember her answer!

“If you are the most famous woman in the world, I shall never be able to love you better, for, Maudie dear, aren’t you my baby?”

Then we both forgot for a time that we were going to be brave and different from other women, and mingled our tears as only a mother and daughter can when a separation of many thousands of miles is staring them in the face.

Of course the long journey had its charms, and once the tears had been well braved back, my interest awoke, and I was the busy, inquisitive little mite of old. I remember we were blockaded for hours in the great snow districts (it was February) of Arizona. In the middle of the night the train suddenly halted. No station in sight, my first thought was

of "robbers." Curiously enough, robberies are almost as numerous now as in the days of mail coaches, and I was ready to cover up my head with the bed clothes in the hope of being overlooked when they looted the passengers. Then all my fears were dispelled by the gay shouts of some fellow-travellers who had already opened a snowball battle up the line. It took but a very little time for me to help in the fray, for, if there was anything I did love, it was snow, and I had not had a good pile of it since we left our Canadian home years before.

To me, though, the most interesting part of the journey was the trip across the Atlantic. It was not as eventful as it might have been after the first two days out. On those days we were met by the full force of a terrific storm, which buffeted the great liner about in the angry sea like a cork. One had to fight one's way across the deck inch by inch, clutching at the handrails all the time. Those of the passengers who remained on deck—a very few—were lashed to their deck chairs and the chairs to the railings. Luckily I am a good sailor, but I was sadly disconcerted on this day. The first night out brought its trials and tribulations, and also the greatest fairy revel I had ever witnessed.

I had dropped off to slumberland, when suddenly I was awakened by a terrific thud at my cabin door. The noise was followed by a pitter-patter as of dainty feet, as though someone were executing a light dance just inside my room. I held my breath and peered at the door dimly outlined in the gloom. Fantastic fancies flitted through my brain. The boat rolled, and something fell heavily against the opposite side of the cabin. In a dim way I realised what had happened. I had neglected to see my cabin trunk fastened under the couch, and my smaller belongings in safe places, and now all were rolling to and fro across the floor. My relief was so intense that I believe I laughed, and for long I watched the antics of what my imagination had now transformed into dancing fairies with the big trunk the Fairy King and my bag with its silver mountings his sprightly queen. It was a gorgeous fete they were holding, in which even Lord Toothbrush and Lady Hairpin played important roles, and to the music of the surging waves and their splash against the cabin porthole their revels were kept up till dawn.

I watched them until sheer weariness forced me into a dreamless sleep, but the next morning, when I had to hunt on hands and knees for every one of my things, recalled all again to my memory most vividly.

The storm over, sunshine accompanied us for the rest of the voyage, and delightful it was.

Bremerhaven gave me the first real experience of the guttural German tongue. My head grew dizzy, and my heart heavy. I thought I should never be able to master such a language! This seemed now to me to be my very next step to take, for during the next few days—we had gone on to Berlin—I realised how lost and forlorn one was without being able to express one's own needs and desires. I almost felt like running away from it all, it did seem so appalling and when I heard the tiny tots in the streets chattering away as though it were the easiest thing in the world to use these strange-sounding words, that seemed to have no beginning and no end, I grew positively jealous! It was those children who gave me the courage to get down to work. I felt so stupid!

My reward came, too, very soon. A natural gift for languages and a well disciplined mind helped me along, and soon I, too, could chatter and joke and be serious in a language that grows in beauty the more you study and progress in it.

Long before I had got this far in the German language however, I had begun my earnest hard study of my chosen instrument at the Royal High School of Music.

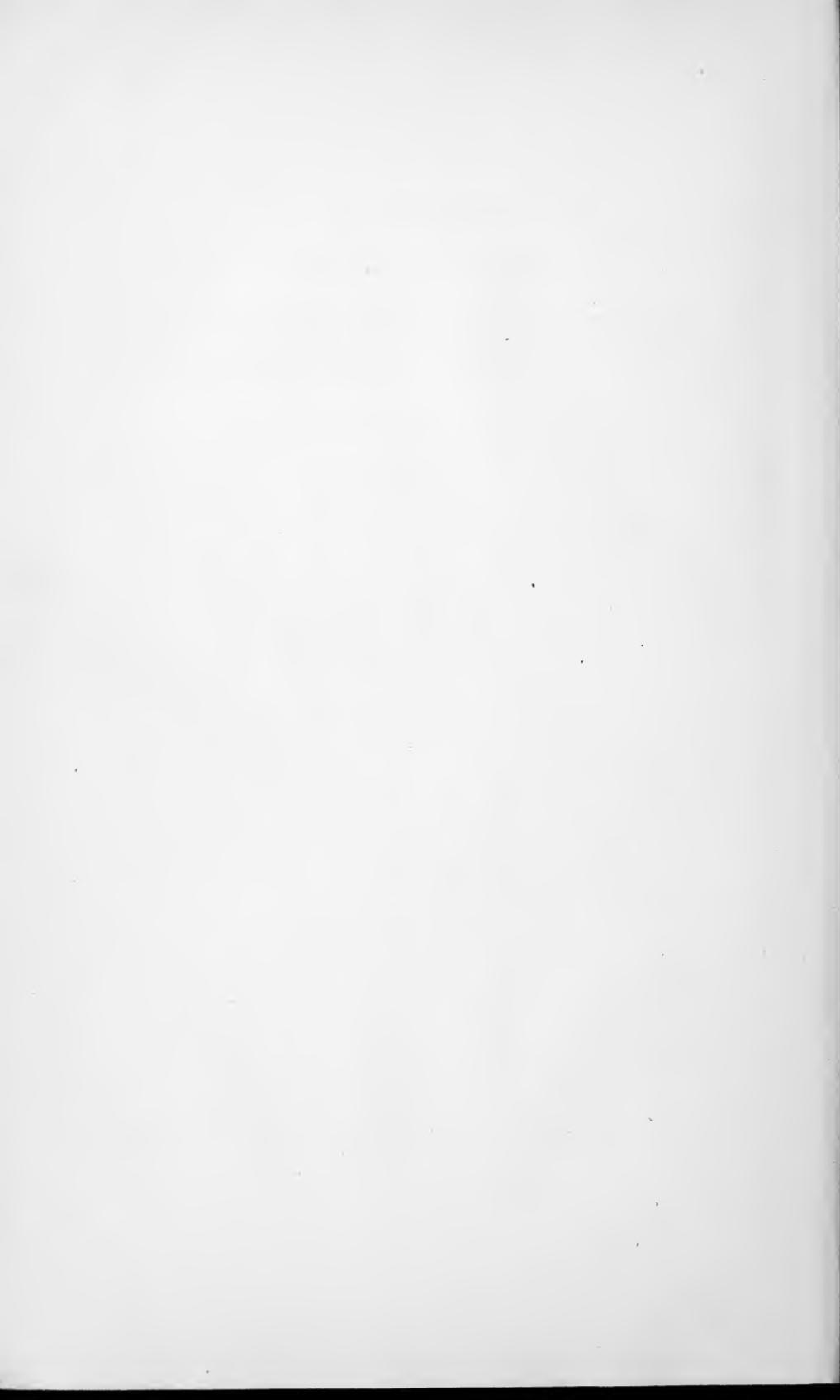
I look back with pleasure to those years of student life, longings and ambitions. I loved a good rainy day; then I threw myself with all my energy into my work, for I did not fear being disturbed by visitors. There was plenty to do, but I was enthusiastic, and found also recreation in my many studies.

It was in this atmosphere of music, art and literature that my next five and a half years were spent, and the delights of those student years can never be effaced from my memory.

Perhaps to many of my readers the routine of a music students' life would be monotonous, and prove dull reading—the charm of it can only be fully realised and appreciated by the student himself—so I'll refrain from wearying you.

Yet I do want to impress upon you that the *Vie Bohème* is not what it is usually thought to be by outsiders—loud, boisterous, idle, and without thought of morality. Far from it. There is a simple childishness, gay and grave, and a warmth and unity of feeling seldom found in social circles. We learned to live and let live, to be guided by the heart rather than by cold calculation, and to divide our last penny cheerfully with our friends. We had, one might say, one purse, and were happy.

Our day's work over, we would gather in the Concert Halls, and listen to the works of great masters, played to us by great artists, and we were joyous and sad, yet refreshed and ready to go at our own little efforts again, to work away each day hoping to get a little nearer to our ideals. Alas! how often has a sister student found a companion in tears, the music lying in shreds on the floor, and the little meagre German breakfast still untouched! The road to perfection and success are two distinct ones, and very hard and thorny at that, and there are days when one thinks one's strength will not stand the trial, and the little guiding light gleaming in the far distance seems shut off for ever. I have gone through such hours, yes, days, when I felt I should have to give everything up and become an ordinary mortal doing ordinary, spirit-killing things, and night after night I watered my pillow with tears of loneliness.



CHAPTER IV.

STUDENT DAYS AND TRAVELS.

During the first of the five years I worked at the Royal Academy High School in Berlin my mother came to Europe, and in my holidays took me through the greater cities of the Old World.

How intensely I enjoyed those happy holidays!

My mother once again with me, my conscience telling of good work done, and rest well earned, and my whole being swelling in the artistic delight of mediæval Florence, of ancient Siena, of Rome—the most interesting place on earth—sunny Naples, and Venice, the dream-city of art and history!

Italy, land of the dance and song, took my soul captive, and as the gladsome day's passed all too swiftly, and my heart grew glad as a child's on a summer's day, I learned more and more of the hidden meaning of the exquisite poetry of music and movement. At night, when the world was at rest and the moonbeams flooded my room, I danced for the joy that was in me, from sheer lightsomeness of heart.

Or, perhaps we would visit some famous town crowded with art treasures and full of stirring incidents of great men and heroes of the ages. Or else we would make our way to the wee villages cradled in the mountain valleys of Switzerland or France, and the hush of the mountain snows fell on my spirit with a soothing touch, and calmed my soul to a sweet blessedness of rest.

One of the most inspiring and delightful trips was to Florence. My stay in Florence would have been a memory landmark to me if only for the impression made by Botticelli's wonderful picture, and the fact that as I stood before it, entranced by the rhythm and the flowing lines of the dancing graces, all my indefinite longings and vague inspirations crystallised into a distinct idea. Art is a method of expression, the expression of feelings and thoughts through beautiful movements, shapes and sounds. To try to express in movement the emotions and thoughts stirred by melody,

beautiful pictures and sculpture had become my ambition.

But Florence is a very treasure store of beautiful things, the Florence of Savonarola, the monk who tried to wake the conscience of mediæval Italy, of Dante, of Michael Angelo, Leonardo di Vinci, the splendid, if immoral, Medicis, and a host of others. My stay there was one long delight and a continual making the acquaintance with the works of great masters of paintings, sculpture and architecture, in an atmosphere of Italian sky and Italian brilliant colouring, and with a consciousness of the pulse and throb of a joyous, sun-warmed people round about me. The sparkle of the sun seems in their veins as its kiss is on their faces. Their wonderful sense of colour is an instinct. They seem unable to help being picturesque.

One scene lives vividly in my memory. I had gone into the country and met a string of Italian women threading their way up from the banks of the Arno. They were barefooted, and the copper bowls they carried on their beautifully poised heads with a rare, unconscious grace flamed red-gold in the sunlight. They bore themselves like goddesses on spring, elastic feet. Pale lilac and orange composed the colours of the dress of one woman. Coral earrings gave another splash of colour. Her dark hair rippled in curls over a low, sun-kissed forehead. Her daring eyes sparkled with the sheer joy of life; her supple, lissom body was a thing of undulations and graceful curves. I just revelled in that picture. Just as I think that I have learnt things from watching the sway of branches, the bend of grass blades before the breeze, the drift of thistledown, the flash and sparkle and dance of sunshine on rippling water, foam-crested mountain waves dancing a hurricane dance to wild storm music, or snowflakes that seemed to become an embodied spirit as they wreathed a fantastic measure to the song of a winter wind, so, perhaps, I was learning something, storing something up for the future as those barefoot women filed past with the silent music of motion.

Here, to me, was music, poetry, dancing; harmony all the more perfect because unconscious.

It was a far cry from that picture on the Tuscan plain to the cabin of a storm-tossed liner, but I can quite well remember that presently I found myself recalling how I had heard

the pitterpatter of elfin, dancing feet in the splash of water against the cabin door, when my trunk and other things broke loose and I lay awake, my imagination changing, bobbing, jumping trunks, and boots and shoes, and other escaped prisoners, into dancing fairies and little goblins, and the biggest trunk of all into a kind of goblin fairy king with the slenderest and most agile legs imaginable.

Those days in Florence were one long delight. Thinking of my student friends in Berlin. I often regretted that they were not with me to share my pleasures, my wanderings through the great galleries and palaces, the Uffizi, the academy, or in the coolness of the Duomo listening to and witnesising some religious ceremony in a play of light and shadow, with censers swinging and clouding the air with heavy-scented incense, the colour of vestments and glittering cross, the flickering candles, the acolytes, the roll of majestic music, making powerful appeals to one's senses; or looking at the stone on which Dante was once wont to sit in the cool of the summer evening, dreaming perhaps of Beatrice as he remembered her when a boy, in her flaming gown and mantle green and white veil. One does not require much imagination to conjure up ghosts in Florence.

It was in the Palazzo degli Uffizi that I saw perhaps the greatest of all Botticelli's pictures, "The Birth of Venus," and also, dripping from the sublime to the ridiculous, met one of my abominations in the shape of two people with blind eyes and a guide-book. Most of us who have travelled are acquainted with the person with a guide-book.

It is a most wonderful picture with its pale colours of early morning, and one feels the wind blowing about Venus as she stands there on the edge of the shell, a vision of love. Sight of it evoked again the longing to give expression in movement, in dance, to the feelings stirring in me, when a voice at my elbow:—

"Hallo! What's this? Who's this by? What is the number?"

There they were with the guide-book, a man and a woman.

And their almost first thought was, "What's the number?" They did not use their senses, the beauties of the wonderful canvas had no power to arrest them, hold them, and thrust

out thoughts of who had painted it, and the number. The man fixed pince-nez stolidly on his nose, and instead of looking at Botticelli, read the guide-book intently, while his wife, close to his elbow, shared it with him. And, having read their guide-book, they went their way. They had mastered the probable date of the painting of the painter, and the mechanical fact that the figures were nearly life-size; but of the beauties of that supreme achievement of genius they knew—just nothing. Blind eyes!

The man's voice reached me again.

"Hullo, who's this by? What's the number?"

When I looked towards them, where they stood before a Fra Angelico, their eyes were glued to the book. They were studying it most intently, ramming dates and mechanical facts into their heads. That book might have been their Bible, and their salvation dependent on getting those facts off by heart. Blind eyes!

All the ensuing winter my thoughts were filled with pressing ideas. I dared hardly mention them to any one. I feared to be misunderstood, and a jeering remark would have hurt me dreadfully; so I kept my own counsel and let idea upon idea gather and grow in my brain quietly and undisturbed by outside counter influences until the day of days should come when I felt strong enough to present a logical conclusion to days of thought.

Our next notable and influencing journey was to Milan, another treasure-store, where we stayed some time. I was still studying and playing; but there were times when a feeling of being a prisoner would come over me at the piano. Music was still an intense delight to me; but not all-sufficing. I would imagine rhythmic movements to whatever I might be playing. The trunks and boots and shoes had become dancing fairies in my cabin on the liner, and now music would almost visualise into rhythmic motion, shape, and pose. And round about me were the glories of sculpture and painting, the best of great geniuses, exercising a moving, great influence, stimulating thought and broadening conception in a hundred subtle ways. I had begun to take life seriously when I put up my hair and discarded short frocks.

It was at Milan, in the refectory of Santa Maria delle Grazie,

that I saw another great masterpiece that left a lasting impression—Leonardo da Vinci's "Last Supper." The beauty and emotions portrayed in it by an inspired genius rise above defacement and deplorable condition. But it is sad to think that Leonardo's own experiments in colours conspired against the durability of his masterpiece. The great Goethe has written of it: "The artist represents the peaceful little band round the sacred table as thunderstruck by the Master's words—'One of you shall betray Me.' They have been pronounced; the whole company is in dismay, while He Himself bows His head with downcast eyes. His whole attitude, the motion of His arms and hands, all seem to repeat with heavenly resignation, and His silence to confirm, the mournful words—'It cannot be otherwise. One of you shall betray Me.'"

I visited this little refectory day after day, and seemed never able to gather in all the beauty of this wondrous work, and my eyes never wearied of looking at it.

It was these great works that filled my soul with longings indescribable; I felt so happy in their presence, and peace reigned supreme in my soul. These days spent wandering amid such glorious and wondrous creations did much to crystallise and form my vague thoughts into a connecting chain, and I desired to return to Berlin to get to work.

But my brain was dizzy with all I had seen of human hands' making, and I felt I must first hold counsel with Nature in its pure simplicity and grandeur. So we wandered to the Italian lakes, to broad Maggiore, winding Como, and Lugano beneath the shadows of the giant Monte Generoso. Here was quiet, and a great feast of colour. Intense skies, blut waters, island gardens, distant snow-capped mountains, purple hills, flooding sunshine. Golden-clustering laburnum, oleander groves grey against the vivid green of chestnut and walnut tree. Lilies of the valley, great patches of purple columbines, the pine lilies of San Bruno! And the air charged with fragrance! The cities had been wonderful; but here one drank in a sense of breadth and space and freedom, and turned from the works of man to the glories of Nature and her perfect harmonies.

My heart delighted in returning this time to my cosy little study room in the fourth etage of one of Berlin West's comfortable houses, for I knew what was going to mature there.

and I rejoiced. I knew I could nevermore get away from these new ideas, and could hardly wait to get there again. To return to my friends always gave me pleasure unbounded, and now, too, it was almost Christmas, and I could not somehow picture there being such a Christmas in Italy as that to which I was going in Berlin. I could picture great ceremonies with pomp and circumstance, in domed churches, purple-mantled prelates, picturesque acolytes, much glittering of gold and winking of myriad candles; but I could not picture the Christmas-tree, the homeliness, the mystery and excitement of presents, the singing of simple carols, and the delight of men and women not ashamed to be as children on *Heiliger Abend*.

I was just looking forward to my Christmas and my Christmas-tree and my friends. The Renaissance had birth in Italy; but neither the northern spirit of Christmas nor the Christmas-tree.

From the quiet and stillness and expanse of the Italian lakes into the Christmas excitement of Berlin. It was like a tonic. Good fellowship was in the frost-bitten air, and crisp snow, as was fitting, on the ground. Sturdy, stolid men, with relaxed faces, carrying parcels, men who at another time of the year would refuse point-blank to do such a thing. And the touching side of Christmas—simple working-men carrying home a small Christmas-tree and presents for the *Bescherung*—the cost of pinching and saving. Many memories of that Christmas return to me. The crowded streets, the squeak of toys being hawked, and the snow swirling and dancing and wrapping round men and women like white-flecked draperies. Everyone seemed happy, excited, and content to be children, and yet again and again some face—that, perhaps of a big working-man, with a small bundle of presents in one hand and a little tree tucked under his other arm, destined to bring gladness and the spirit of Christmas, candle-lit, into his many-childrened home—would bring a lump into my throat.

In Germany Christmas Eve—*Holy Evening*, as they call it—is the night of the tree, the festival, and the *Bescherung*, or spread of presents—presents wrapped up and neatly tied with ribbon, kept profoundly secret, and arrayed round the base of the tree.

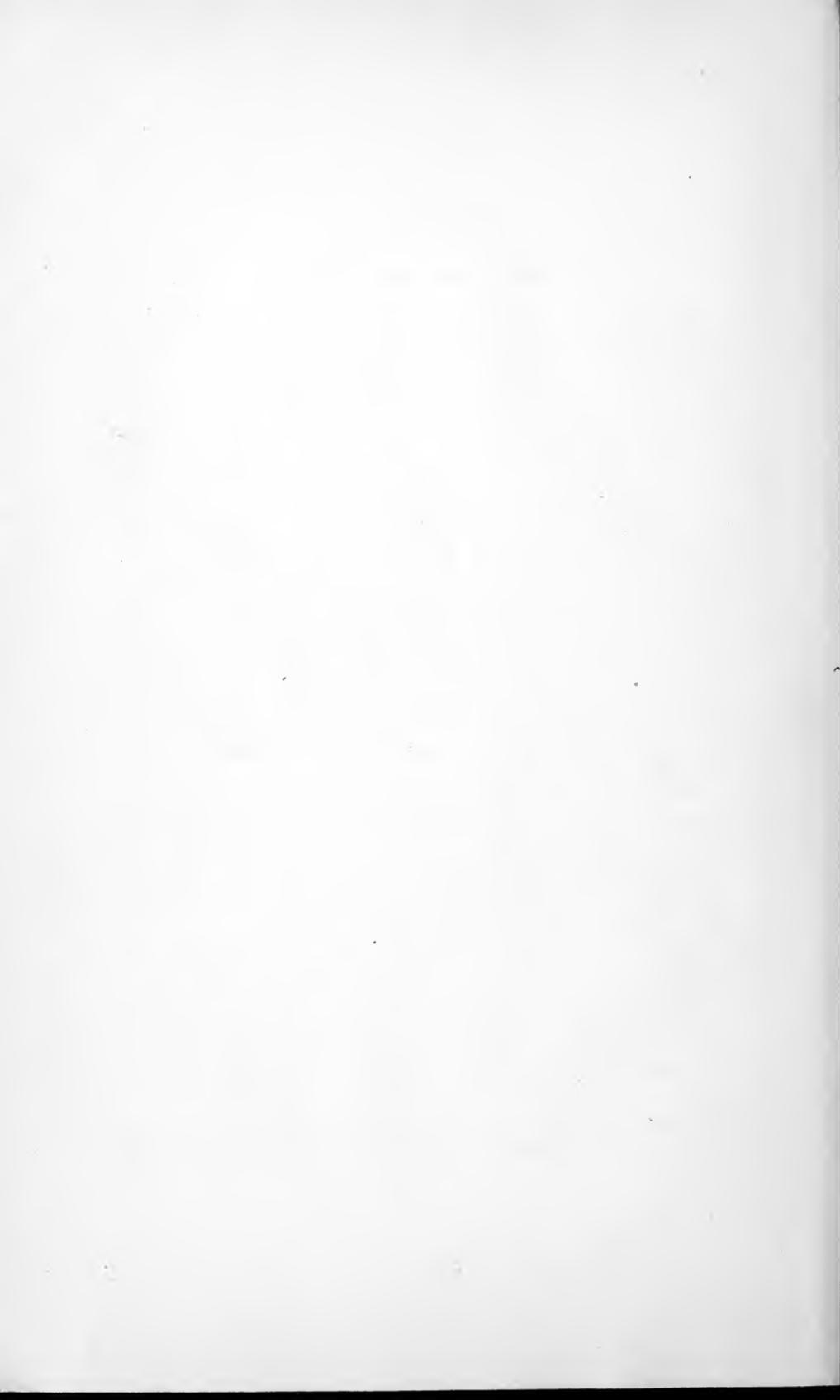
I went out and bought my presents and my tree, bushy and

broad at the base, sticking out prim and formally, and tapering finely.

I am not in the least ashamed to admit the happiness I derived from decorating my tree and anticipating the coming of my friends. I set a snowy cloth on a low table, and on this the tree. Over the branches I drew white wool and sprinkled it with silver frost. On the branches I set short white candles. Round about the base I put my presents, white-papered and bound with red ribbon. And then I added a touch of colour to my white tree, a little cold till now. I took some lengths of narrow, red baby-ribbon—red for love—and mingled them with the white and frost-glitter. Then I set forth in simple dishes refreshment that included pfefferkuchen, nüsse, and stolle.

Outside were gathered my friends. They were beginning to sing "Stille Nacht." I took my stand beside my twinkling tree, the white candles spoiled by no other lights, and the folding doors of the room were opened.

Twinkling candles, carols, presents, faces lit with goodwill and friendship, greetings, merry-making and laughter, with an under-current of those deeper emotions that affect the throat and the beat of the heart—I was happy!



CHAPTER V.

THE HUMAN BODY MY INSTRUMENT.

The idea that had crystallised in Italy as I stood before Botticelli's "Primavera" was uppermost in my mind. As yet I had taken no one into my confidence—as I have a nature that dislikes to be influenced, perhaps because of lack of self-confidence, and I wanted to feel "fighting fit." Then I would not fear either individual or even public opinions and suggestions. Now I listen to and take from them what I see fit to take, otherwise go my own way, and this I have done from the beginning. I have been trained so from the time I can remember. My parents were to my mind very clever in that they never said "No" or "Yes" in the well known, all too domineering style of many parents. My questions were always cleverly answered, and where a decision was required in minor matters, important, however, in a child's mind, they invariably said, "Well, mamma or papa would do so, or would not, but you may do as you think best." Of course, a thoughtful child, or any child trained in this manner, would go off and really think the matter over, and arrive at some conclusion not so stupied either.

All my life I have had opportunity in this way to act and judge for myself, and so in this new work I held court and heard the pros and cons of it all to myself, and drew my own conclusions, and wanted no interference from the outside until I felt confident that it would not affect me other than to enable me to sift and get good out of it.

Now, I found that my interest was more and more attracted to the subject of Physical Culture. I felt that a healthy, sound, well toned instrument was the first great necessity for the carrying out of this great work. My body was my instrument and my thought now was to test and find what was lacking, then to work to remedy the neglected parts.

It had always been my habit to do physical exercises every morning after my bath; not set, one-two-three-four, hands-

above-your-head, out-in-front-of-you, down-by-your-side kind of exercises, but just as the spirit moved on. As soon as physical exercises become mechanical—a matter of one, two, three, and a stolid expression or one of physical pain—their virtue is gone from my point of view. Body and mind should be en rapport. Even in such a seemingly prosaic thing as after bath exercises, the body should give expression to a thought. The better, the more poetic, or more musical the inspiration, the more graceful the physical expression. A drill sergeant is all very well for soldiers; dumb-bells and elastic exercisers for raising up lumps of muscles; but a woman who seeks grace of movement is best served when she strives to harmonise motion with inspiration, be it that of music, the graceful figure of some picture or statue that imagination has endowed with moving life, or memory of some nature picture, a wind rippled cornfield, or the dance of autumnal forest leaves.

With such things as these for inspiration and stimulus, time does not count. There is a joy in them all. It is not a question of five minutes by the clock at one, two, three, four, heels together, hands above your head, out, down. One forgets oneself, yet effort and the desire for perfection are there, the desire to give truer, more perfect expression to the inspiration, to attain the unattainable—perfection. All the drudgery of formal practising and training is lacking. At the same time the body, by an almost unconscious process, grows more and more responsive to inspiration, a more ready instrument of expression. I have never in my life practised with one eye on a clock and to the tick of an imaginary metronome, any more than when my thoughts turned towards fitting draperies I contemplated pink tights and a stiff skirt like an inverted tea saucer.

And as I write this, I cannot help quoting Ruskin's beautiful words: "Fix, then, in your mind . . . that your art is to be the praise of something you love." He says also, "As soon as the artist forgets his function of praise in that of imitation, his art is lost. His business is to give, by any means, however imperfect, the idea of a beautiful thing; not, by any means, however perfect, the realisation of an ugly one."

Francois Delsarte's theories teach us that every fibre, every muscle, and every feeling should have its existence so well

defined that at any moment it can actually assert itself. His teaching rests on the inseparability of body and spirit, which, united through interchange of effects, results in an harmonious existence.

For example, he compared the human being with a musical instrument. The back being the keyboard, the spinal column the keys, the various members and muscles the strings. The player of this instrument, the soul, which is designed to transpose the movements of the body into music.

So I worked on, finding unspeakable joy from delving into any works on the subject that I could find. I felt I had a great, grand secret, and I guarded it jealousy.

One day I remember well, looking back upon these happy days. There was a child, a little girl, daughter of a well-known American musical critic residing in Berlin, and I set myself to teach her to dance after my fashion, to dance me a story. Her name was Carla, and clever and beautiful she was, with fluffy golden curls and eyes of deepest blue shaded by long lashes, black as night. I loved this little girl with her heart full of beautiful pure impulse, and it was a joy to me to whisper a story into her dainty ear and bid her dance it to me.

This time I told her of a little girl who wandered into the forest and, plucking a flower, blew through the frail stem a note of music. To her the elves and spirits came wandering, and she danced with them until the moon had gone and left the woodland in shadow. When I had finished this simple story, I went away, telling her to think how she could repeat it all in silence. Then it came to me that I surely might so give unspoken eloquence to a music story that audiences would, at my will, come into the woods with me, and would feel sorrow or terror or gladness as I showed it. To set my own interpretation upon the meaning of a master and to convey that meaning to the accompaniment of the music was what I longed to do.

Thus you see how day by day my work went on, from morning till night, and all the time I was ever thinking, ever trying, ever rejecting, ever accepting new influences.



CHAPTER VI.

MY WEIMAR DAYS.

The summer of 1901 I spent in delightful Weimar, as one of the disciples of, to me, the greatest living pianist, Ferruccio Busoni. It had been my keen desire to be directed in my musical studies by him, and so when I received his affirmative reply to my letter asking if I might attend his classes, I felt as though I could shout my joy from the house tops.

At the invitation of the Grand Duke of Weimar he had taken Franz Liszt's place, and Weimar once more had its Meister Schule for piano playing.

Old world Weimar, with its quiet squares, is rich in its associations with German art and literature, and its atmosphere is very different from that of busy, up-to-date Berlin. Here the great giant of German literature, Goethe, lived fifty years of his life. Schiller came here towards the end of his days, at Goethe's invitation. Goethe's house in the Goethe Platz is the shrine of many pilgrims. In one room is the piano on which young Mendelssohn played. Kronach's great picture of the Crucifixion, in which he introduced the faces of Martin Luther, Melancthon, and Bugenhagen, hangs in the Stadt-Kirche. In Liszt's vine-covered house the pupil-room is the same as when the great master taught there.

There was much for me to see and study at Weimar besides my music. Also I came in touch with a broader spirit of what I had best call Bohemian bon camaraderie than I had met in Berlin. It was the kind of Bohemianism that I frankly delighted in, though I may as well confess that it did not appeal in the same way to certain old-fashioned inhabitants, who had either never possessed youthful spirits, or had forgotten the days when they had. But of this more presently.

The most delightful relations existed between Busoni and his pupils. To us he was something much more than a great master of his art. We really might have been his children, and when our work was done we seemed to share quite naturally in his family life, with his wife, the dearest of women.

and his two beautiful children. And what a mixture! American, Sotch, Canadian, Russian, Servian, Austrian, French, Italian, and other nationalities. The German tongue was our Esperanto.

We devoted our mornings to hard study. Busoni was an inspiring master. On two afternoons in the week, Tuesday and Friday, we gathered at the Tempel Herrenhaus for an informal kind of concert. There was no fixed programme. But though there was a delightful spontaneity about these afternoons, we only gave of our very best. In fact, in one respect they were not unlike a Quakers' meeting, when only those who feel inspired rise to speak. But there the comparison ceases.

We were really like a very large, happy family. On other afternoons, when lunch was done, we would go to Busoni's beautiful villa for afternoon coffee. No ceremony, no formality; we were sure of friendliness and simple welcome. Time had a way of skipping on these delightful afternoons, and we generally stayed to tea as well. At other times Busoni and his wife would come to us, or perhaps make an expedition to one of those open-air spots, beloved by Germans, and take our coffee there. It might be to the beautiful lawn of the Tempel Herrenhaus, or to the Belvedere Chateau. Delightful places abound around Weimar. Indeed, we loved our master for the kindly simple nature that went hand-in-hand with his wonderful brilliancy in art, and no one delighted more in our affection and respect for him than his dear wife.

My memories of those Weimar days are like a breath of clean, fresh air. This kind of personal intimacy between master and pupils is characteristic of German student life. Professors are not afraid that their influence will be lessened or their dignity abated by revealing themselves human. Somehow, I cannot picture so easily an Oxford "don" unbending in the same way. And an Oxford "don" playing "Cat and Mouse" after dusk with his pupils! Shades of dead and gone Vice-Chancellors!

Ought I to whisper it? I have played that game in the squares of Weimar with a band that included a professor and his wife. Worse still, certain prim and formal old ladies complained to the authorities, and the police were doubled in

certain quarters to prevent the possibility of any repetition of such a terrible offence!

We certainly did disregard some conventions. Another cause of complaint was our whistle. Instead of climbing up many stairs to a friends' room, we would whistle a two-noted, peculiar signal from the street. It saved time, and was part of the bon camaraderie that made those days delightful. Sometimes as we wandered through the squares and streets, a Bohemian band of brothers and sisters, we would all link arms and take two short steps with one foot and a long one with the other, and so continue "Hoola!" It was just glad spirits asserting themselves spontaneously, and if we did behave like children let loose, I for one have had no regrets since.

Then we would have supper parties in our rooms, after which we would see one another home, a somewhat lengthy process, delayed by "Hoola" and "Cat and Mouse." A quiet, moonlit square, a ring of us linked hand to hand, now closing in and shutting out the pursuer, now opening out to permit the pursued to dodge and thread a way among us; laughter, excitement and unfeigned happiness—that is my remembrance of "Cat and Mouse" as we played it till those prim, shocked inhabitants put the police on our wicked tracks. But, perhaps we had kept them awake!

But those delightful, free-and-easy days of hard study and bon camaraderie came to a close all too soon.

The autumn of 1901 found me back in Berlin. I was continuing to give rhythmic physical expression to my fancies and the inspiration of silent music or the memories of picture or nature; but I was still keeping my own confidence. My joy in trying to give expression to my idea seemed to make the idea grow, and soon it was dominating my thoughts. Perhaps of all the great painters whose works I have studied, Botticelli has influenced me the most. His lyrical imagination, his love of the wind and all things that the wind stirs, trees, draperies, floating hair, so wonderfully expressed in his paintings, and his pure love of the human form, never defiled by a descent to meretricious art, had deeply impressed themselves upon me. But if he inspired pose in those formative days, I was thinking more of the Greek dancing girls when I turned my thoughts to my draperies. On those lines I fashioned my first dress.

I had no doubts as to the rightness and truth of my idea, but I did experience dark moments when I wondered if I were the fitting person to give it expression.

I had made the acquaintance of many distinguished artistic and literary men and women in Berlin, and among these Marcel Remy, the Belgian composer, musical critic, and savant. But as yet I did not know him well enough to count him a friend, deeply as I respected and admired his sparkling talents and his unerring, sensitive taste, and I little dreamed when I thought of mentioning my idea to him, that he would one day compose the music for "The Vision of Salomé."

CHAPTER VII.

I have had many sorrows in my short life, sorrows too great and deep to mention in this little volume, and they, I feel, have been the keynote to stirring my soul from its childish sleep and making my every fibre quiver in the softest wind of sentiment and my soul and spirit sigh for the truth of existence.

An episode in my life has left its deep imprint upon my work, and caused me to throw myself deeper into my studies, thus influencing greatly the turn and development of my mind.

Soon after the close of this episode in my life I had, as I have already mentioned, the extreme good fortune to meet, and soon to count as one of my friends, that very clever man, Marcel Remy.

It was after a concert given by my old master and friend, Busoni, that I mentioned my ideas about dancing to Marcel Remy, the Belgian composer and musical critic. This was in Berlin, and Berlin does not lend itself, like Weimar, with its quiet, old-world squares, to 'Hoplà' and "Cat and the Mouse." But the supper at the Co-operative that followed the concert, with Busoni and his wife for host and hostess, their more intimate friends gathered about them, art, literature, and music represented, was delightfully free from the stiff, academic spirit which I confess to disliking most cordially. Spontaneity was the order of the evening.

I spoke of my idea, my ambition—dancing as an art of poetical and musical expression—to Marcel Remy. But please do not think that I was under the impression that I had given birth to a new idea. It was—if not as old as the hills—old. There is an Attic vase, probably moulded 600 years or more before the Christian era. The ancient Greek writing upon it says that the vase is to be given as a prize to the dancer who expresses joyousness most vividly.

Marcel Remy was deeply interested at once. As well as being a musician, he was a savant, a Greek scholar. It was a happy inspiration to confide in him. The sculptor, the artist, and the man of learning range more widely in quest of subjects

than the musician pure and simple. Remy spoke of dancing, in the true Hellenic spirit, as a dead and forgotten art; of the unending possibilities open to one who should endeavour to re-create a lost art of expression. His encouraging words were as fuel to fire. Very generously and whole-heartedly he offered to assist me in the matter of research. So I came to have the assistance of one who was not only scholar and critic, but artist to his finger-tips.

After that I worked, worked, worked, harder than ever. Not drudgery, nor mechanical; but work, and very hard work at that.

I cannot help smiling. Only a short while ago I received at the Palace Theatre a letter from one of my own sex. It was to the effect that as my life was just one round of pleasure and applause and ease, and hers one of hard toil—cooking, mending and getting hot and growing weary over the washtub—it was only right that I, who made money with no more exertion than a fluttering butterfly, should send to her, a real worker, a substantial sum of money. It rather reminded me of the story of the dentist who wrote to a well-known actor asking for a couple of stalls, on the ground that, though not being personally acquainted with the actor himself, he had the pleasure of extracting a couple of his brother's teeth. Another of my correspondents wrote more laconically, but probably possessed by the same butterfly theory of my existence, and requested £30—by return of post if possible. In fact, it was a demand rather than a request. But my correspondence is not all in this strain, and presently I shall return to the subject. I mention it here because a portion of it reveals the impression in some quarters that whatever success I may have achieved has been obtained by a kind of floating, airy, effortless, butterfly kind of process.

I have worked, and still continue to work and study, quite apart from the physical and mental strain of public performances, **very, very hard.**

The days that followed my conversation with Marcel Remy were days of research and experiment, delving among libraries for old pictures, and studying pose on some ancient vase, jar, or amphora in the museums, with Remy's great knowledge for my guide on what is best termed *orchestric subjects*. It was not

a case of rapid achievement by any means. It was not sufficient to master a pose and its significance, and rest content with that; nothing was more difficult than to weave harmonious, musical connection between the different poses so that there should be no break, so that there should be nothing to mar the rhythmic sense of continuous harmonious expression. It was my endeavour to disperse rhythm harmoniously to the tips of fingers and toes.

There was no time now for other work. The die was cast. So I left the Royal High School of Music, with recommendations from my masters, where it had been my privilege to meet and know, among others, that noble and great artist, Joseph Joachim, and the great composer, Johannes Brahms. I remember how the former often listened to me play, when a student at the Academy, and patted me on the head in his ever kindly way when I had done well.

So when working out my new ideas it was no wonder I longed for a word of recognition from him.

He never repulsed me when I pressed upon him some of my ideas. He would smile ever so sweetly and look long and silently at me, and I have often wondered just what he thought. When I returned after an extensive tour to Berlin to give a dance recital at my old Royal Academy—with all my old professors and Joachim as my judges—I felt a joy indescribable. I submitted my programme to him and he called me aside and said, “Little girl, you may dance anything you like, but dear child, please don’t dance my Beethoven!” I understood him so well, for had he not given to the world the very best interpretations of this glorious master’s work and made them quite a part of himself? I crossed the “Moonlight Sonata” from my programme that night for his sake; I would not play upon the wrong chords in the heart of so great and good a man.

Joachim later said to me, “You have done wonders in your work, my child; where did you get such ideas?”

“You mean,” I asked, “where did I conceive the idea of turning big themes into movement?”

He nodded.

“You remember I told you my thoughts when watching Sarah Bernhardt?”

“Yes.”

"Then once when studying Boticelli's 'Spring,' a picture to me so vivid and beautiful that I could not gaze upon it without emotion, a thought impressed itself upon me"—

"If I could only bring these beautiful women to life again, it would be something for my world to be proud of."

Joachim looked me over from head to foot. And then said slowly, "And you have done it."

I took his hand for the compliment was greater than I had hoped to hear from his lips.

He said the words haltingly, but as if he meant them—

"I do not pretend," I said, still holding his hand, "to be as beautiful as the pictured women yet, that would be hoping too much, but I have done the best I could at any rate."

"Your best," were his final hearty words, "gives your friends hopes for your future."

So spoke great men to me, urging me onward until I felt that by the wishes that filled the air all about me, I should be helped on to the end of my ambitions.

Soon after the meeting with M. Remy and the divulging of my secret, and heart's desire to him, my dear mother returned to America. How I missed her no one will ever know. I was again alone to see after myself. If there is one thing I do love it is to be babied, and this my mother has done ever since I can remember. Now I had to shift for myself, and it did seem hard.

My first dancing dress, the one I used for practising, was the gift of an American artist, a friend and painter to whom one day I told my aspirations. I hope I shall not appear disloyal to my sex when I say that my ambitions and aspirations have always seemed to me to have been better understood by men than women. I have received the greater artistic encouragement and understanding from them. And I do not think the reason is found in the words, sometimes accompanied by a little sneer, "Oh, yes, of course! You're a woman." It was one of my own sex, a nameless princess in a nameless city, who threatened to withdraw her patronage from a certain opera house if "a young person with naked feet" were allowed to dance there.

There was a romance about my first dancing dress. It hailed from Greece, and was perhaps 200 years old, having once been the undergarment of some Greek peasant maiden.

It was of cotton, and as simple as it was clinging and graceful, and light as it was almost curiously warm. This I used for practising. But I was also studying dresses as well as pose in the museums and libraries. The Melpomene in the old museum, Berlin, furnished the model for the sandals that I subsequently wore in some of my religious numbers—numbers that were more suited to a small than a large public audience. I used butter-cloth for the dresses that I designed and made myself, if “made” be the right word for what was really an arrangement of draperies and clasps and girdles, with an eye to soft folds and undulating lines. Very exquisite folds may be obtained by damping the material, rolling it up tightly and keeping it thus for some while.

So, with studying, designing, experimenting, and striving to attain continuous musical expression—spreading from the fountain-thought in a kind of wave over the body to finger-tips and toes—and rhythmical equilibrium, my time was very completely filled.

Sometimes I would dance without music. At others Marcel Remy would come to my study. He possessed the gift of improvisation. I would obey my impulses and try to interpret whatever he might play. At other times I would try to give expression to some piece by Bach, Beethoven, Schubert, or Schumann. Art is long, and not the butterfly, effortless business some people seem to think it is. It was in 1900 that the idea crystallised before Botticelli’s “Spring” in Florence, and it was not until 1903 that I gave my first performance in Vienna.

It was at the Theatre Hall of the Royal Conservatoire of Music, Vienna. My feelings can be more easily imagined than described. Before me was a two hours’ programme, the interpretation and orchestric expression in dance of pieces by Bach, Beethoven, Schubert, and Schumann, to the accompaniment partly of orchestra and partly of grand piano. And an audience composed of distinguished people, artists, musicians, and critics.

Many thoughts crowded upon me; pictures jumped up haphazard before my eyes; memories of places I had visited; some scene—Italian women, barefoot, filling past, the copper bowls on their heads flashing in the sunshine; the memory of a storm, of water splashing with the sound of elfin fee-

against a cabin door. It was a most composite, jumbled crowd of thoughts, many of them seemingly quite inconsequent.

And the great question of success or failure, of the difference between being understood and misunderstood!

I do not think in that brief eternity of time before my first public appearance that my craving and anxiety were for personal success. But the art that I loved, at which I had worked with all the power in me, was about to be submitted to judgment. What if it should be misunderstood!

That to me would have been bitterness itself.

* * * *

Marcel Remy, whose great interest in my work meant so much to me, is now dead. Dead! I can never believe it. His body may rest in God's earth, but his soul lives, and I feel sure he knows of my progress and rejoices in it. I seem still to feel his superior influence. Often, when about to put into form some new ideas, I feel "Halt! that is not as M. Remy would have judged the theme! Think again!" It is wonderful, the lasting influence upon the mind of a really superior intellect.

Some of the rare old books and engravings he left me, and a number of manuscripts, beautiful songs which he composed and dedicated to me, are among my dearest treasures.

Of this man, who was a staunch friend too, I shall always think in the deepest gratitude. I like to think that in his declining years it may have been a source of gratification to him to guide a young mind and open up in it an understanding for the greater and more important problems of life. I rejoiced, too, in being his pupil, and would fain give to him all the thanks of a grateful heart.

CHAPTER VIII.

STEPPING STONES.

A few people have been veritable stepping-stones for me in my career. Since 1903 and my successful appearance in Vienna, with words of praise from such clever and acknowledged authorities as Dr. Richard Walleschek, the brilliant author, Dr. Rudolf Lothar, and others, I turned, glowing cheeked and exulting, my face towards Brussels. Here it was a very great good fortune that befell me when I met Mr. Schlesinger, the President of the Cercle Artistique, and Mr. Charles Castermans and Mr. Goethals—men of influence and friends of Mr. Remy. These people proved not only solid stepping-stones to fame for me but I won them as friends, and their advice was of unmistakable importance to my career. I have, too, to speak of Natalie Townsend, wife of Laurence Townsend, at that time the Ambassador of the United States in Brussels. This charming, extremely clever woman—she is the composer of many delightful songs—gave me her protection. Through her, whose mental activity interested me greatly, I made my successful public appearance in Brussels and won the applause and understanding of the artistic world of that city. Through Mr. du Chastain, *hommes des lettres*, I met little Mdlle. Bernard, a literary lady of eighty-one, with white, smoothly arranged hair, whose “salon,” the last of its kind, is renowned for its high intellectual tone, and is frequented by the highest in the land. She gave me many encouraging words. “I cannot but feel the purity and refinement in your portrayals,” she said, “and look forward to the day when your efforts will be universally acknowledged and treated with the reverence due them and with which they are given.” This, from this world-experienced dear little woman, made my heart beat with joy, and I resolved then and there, however long it might take me, to try to reach the heights she had looked up to for me. I may not have done so yet, but, God helping, I will!”

Eugen Ysaye and Caesar Tompson and his adorable wife

gave me, too, many a word of bright encouragement during my less enviable days, and it seems to me now that had I not had the blessed good fortune to meet and personally know all those brilliant people, I might have fallen, tired and foot-sore, by the wayside. For, as I once before said, the Road to Completion of a Heart's-desire and to Fame, is long and full of stumbling stones, and all uphill.

My short public career, begun in 1903, has taken me far. I have appeared in many German cities, toured Switzerland and Austria Hungary, and even in Belgrade I gave four recitals. Budapest was very novel, and there I had a glimpse of a gaiety unknown in more northern cities, and of enthusiasm born in a minute! What a nation and what a sense of rhythm! Back in Munich the very air seemed heavier, slower!

It was in Munich that I received my first and only rebuff of a serious nature. I had an engagement to appear at the Schauspielhaus in a series of performances of my interpretations of Music, and *Salome*. The censur had given me its blessing, and all seemed satisfied, when suddenly a "Verbot" from the Bavarian Government was issued against me! It proved to be the result of a political policy for the preservation of the public morals! A club of old men had petitioned Herr von Halden to issue this "Verbot" and, being close to the election time, the request was granted, although the worthy gentleman admitted that he had not seen my dancing, and could only judge from what the club members who had seen it reported.

Otto Julius Beerbaum, one of Germany's cleverest and most widely known authors, defended me and my art in a feuilleton in the Berlin *Tageblatt* of April, 1907, most magnanimously, for which I thank him in grateful appreciation. In spite of petitions sent in by the famous Prof. Franz Stück, and others who were keenly interested in my productions, Herr von Halden refused to withdraw his decision against "*Salomé*," and only through subscriptions was it possible to present this number to the Munich public. Needless to say, the subscription evenings were perhaps more successful than a regular one would have been—and why? Because my audience was a purely artistic and intellectual one.

Paris was the scene of my next engagement. I had longed

to visit Paris and its wonders, and the train seemed never to get there.

At last we were spinning from the station through traffic-crowded streets. I don't think, though, it impressed me as I had dreamed it would. I took up my abode in a nice little hotel near the Opera—Hotel de Londres et New York—and, although all alone, felt quite happy and comfortable. My chief interest was naturally centred in the glories of the Louvre, and here I wandered for hours at a time until I thought I would drop and surely never be able to dance in the evening.

This was May, 1907, and the following September found me in Marienbad awaiting the command to appear before the King of England.

While in Paris I met Madame Yvette Guilbert, whose unique talent has made her popular and esteemed the wide world over. I gladly complied with her request to dance at a charity matinee which she was organising at the Theatre Sarah Bernhardt. Later I felt that it was as if I had cast my bread upon the waters, and it had been returned to me after many days, for it was through the generous efforts of this great artiste and her husband, Dr. Schiller, that I was enabled to dance for His Majesty.

An introduction to the Princess Murat and through her to Mrs. Hall-Walker, further paved the way for me, and I might say, too, with roses, for a few days afterwards, I was summoned to dance before King Edward, and I remember that it was with fear and trembling that I began my work, although when in the midst of any of my dances, I am seldom cognisant of any personality near. But I think I should be forgiven if, that once, the thought of England's King watching me gravely, influenced me and, afterwards I realised, favourably. I think it was the happiest moment of my life when he took my hand with his calm great dignity and told me he considered my art a beautiful one and my dances worthy of the word *classical*.

Before I went away Mrs. Hall-Walker whispered to me:—

“His Majesty was so pleased with you that if you go to London perhaps you will have the good fortune to appear before the Queen too.”

“Oh! Do you really think so?” I cried, and my emotion

was so genuine that tears gathered slowly in Mrs. Hall-Walker's beautiful eyes. "Truly I have not lived, struggled and suffered over my work in vain."

"So I had cast my bread, had I not? For had I not responded to Madame Guilbert's call in Paris and thus made her happy, I should probably not have been entertained by Mrs. Hall-Walker, and thus my precious dream would not have been realised. A hard busy year successfully ended, I felt I had now earned a holiday, and happy and full of new enthusiasm took the first train that would bring me to my friends, Baron de Tscharner and his dear wife, Marthe, in their lovely home, "Morillon," near Berne.

A more delightful three weeks could not be imagined, and it was with genuine regret that I bade them adieu just two days before I had to start my Winter Season, 1907-8, which, now that it is over, after touching Prague, Hamburg, Berlin, and London, I can truthfully say was a success from beginning to end.

By no means, though, imagine that all the between times were filled with good fortune. Far from it. A necessary evil in the life of an artist seems to be the theatrical agent. Alas, however, my dealings with these have not been of the rosiest. I have had several experiences rather interesting and very typical of the way in which young artists are taken advantage of. It was an eye-opener to me, yet it has not even now taught me to be less trusting. This agent—Concert Agent S. of Berlin—offered me a contract for Hanover, which, however, never materialised other than in letters and verbal conversations. I objected strongly to the conditions of the same, and refused to accept unless my terms were agreed to. Although this was the case, he posed as having full power to act for me, and proceeded to arrange with the "Directoire" for the preliminary announcements of the forthcoming "dance recital."

I knew nothing of this, and, just two or three days before the date set by him for my appearance, I received a hurried message asking when I would leave for Hanover! I was more than astonished, and after a lengthy discussion he told me that in order to get the guarantee I demanded, he himself had used a "Notlüge" to the Hanover director, i. e., that

he, Agent S——, would pay half out of his own pocket if the director would give the other half.

"Are you prepared to carry out your promise to the director?"

He laughed rudely, and said, "Oh, no!"

Naturally, I felt something was very out of order, and immediately telegraphed to Hanover that I would not come, and they were not to expect me. This caused no little excitement, and before many days had passed I had a letter from the agent S—— demanding that I should pay the sum of about 500 marks, expenses in which the preparation for my "Gast Spiel" had involved them, by return post. Naive!

Of course I didn't send 500 marks by return post. Shortly afterwards I was summoned to court. The Hanover director was suing me!

I needed but to tell the judge the story to have his sympathy. But before the case ended the Agent S—— had sworn falsely, and it came to light that the theatre had offered, by half, better conditions than I had demanded through my agent! The agent had kept this a secret, and succeeded in making me believe that the half only of what I had demanded had been offered or could be obtained. So, you see, the said agent, besides working for his ten per cent., also wanted to cheat me out of two-thirds of my rightful gain. Needless to say, I won the case, and now the Concert Agency of Hanover is suing Agent S—— for the amount! I hope they too will win.

He evidently thought that, matters being in such an advanced stage at Hanover, I should be influenced, and give in to his terms rather than disappoint the public.

Another type—a big, burly, blustering, conceited German, who, having been unable to get along in his own country, left for England and lived his peculiar life in London and in the suburbs for seven years, together with his very obnoxious wife, a young, but hard, shrewd, Hungarian Jewess. Another S——. It almost makes me feel suspicious of agents whose names begin with S. But that would be unjust.

This German couple were most amusing. They grew positively angry, and flew into a rage, when one recognised them as German. "We are English." My! but outward appearance and then the accent told the sad, sad tale!

This man was like an overgrown baby elephant in many ways. He had a red moon face, sort of an apology for a nose, and two watery blue eyes that were never quiet. She dark as night, and with a bitter, bitter tongue. A well-matched pair; but she had the reins in her hand! Before the contract was signed, glorious sunshine and roses—after, thunder clouds and hail storms! For nine months life was for me an utter misery. To be in the hands of such inhuman people was worse than words can describe, for they rejected no means to force their views on me, even trying to make me believe I was mad—yes, raving mad. It came about in this way: Once, when through his vulgar mode of reclame, we met with a partial failure, they tried to make me believe I was doomed, and could never start again unless they felt inclined to help me; and to enable them to do so they tried to force me almost by laying hands on me, to sign a contract not to marry for the duration of the existing contract and its two prolongations, i. e., for five years. As they knew marriage would make void any contract, they wanted to be sure of their booty. Not being able to force me, they flew at me with the question—

“Do you know what they say of you?”

“No, but perhaps it would be interesting to know. You seem so absurdly excited about something,” I answered.

“Well,” they said, and this in a weird, theatrical whisper, “you are mad, raving mad. We ought to have you put into an asylum.”

This struck me merely as amusing, so I kept as quiet and cool as the mountain lakes and invited his rage, whilst his wife, with clenched hands and frenzied expression, flew at me, saying:—

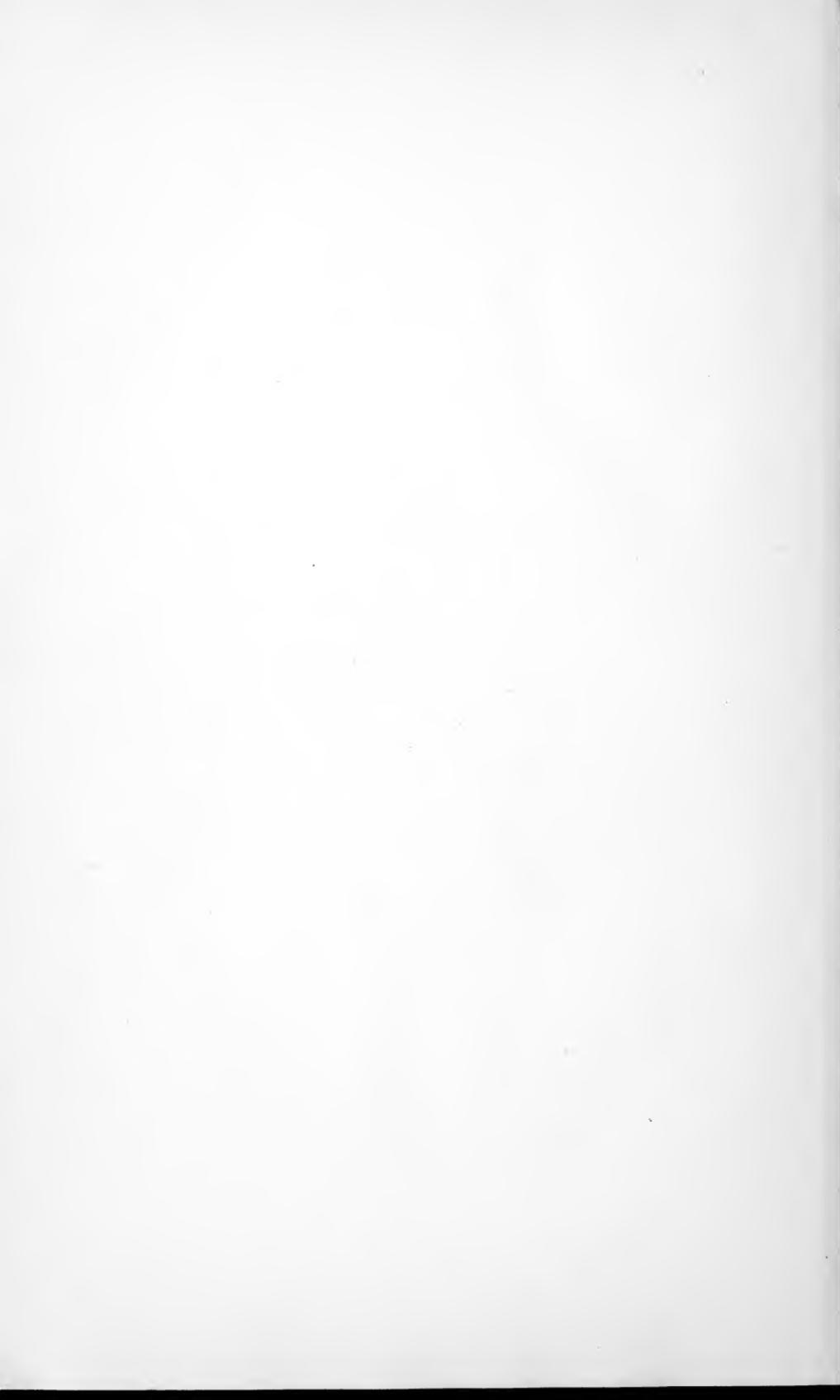
“I should like to strangle you!”

“Why don’t you?” I smilingly replied.

This was just one month before this adventurous pair broke the then existing contract with me, in that they ran away with my money at the close of my very successful Paris engagement. A good large sum, too, of four figures. I had been foolish, and had allowed him to collect it at the office for me upon the condition that he handed it over, less his commission, within twenty-four hours. The twenty-four hours are still

pending. That was May, 1907. Instead, I received a letter, saying, "When you get this, I'll be in Geneva." Voila! Thank God, though, I was free again, and my future bright, so let the thief have the money.

Another time, two women—one well known in the theatrical profession, and to the world too—cheated me out of my rightfully due money, and now say, "If you think we owe you money, go legally to work to get it." And this sentence, uttered by the shrewder of the two, was accompanied by a smile verging on a sneer, while her hands, as usual, ungloved—we had met again after one year at the home of a mutual acquaintance in Paris, and were now standing waiting for a cab—were stuffed into the outside pockets of her very mannish-looking coat. But it seems to be the principle of the two women not to pay debts, unless positively cornered! I believe their hotel bills in Marseilles are still owing, and that was two years ago exactly!



CHAPTER IX.

CRITICISMS AND LETTERS.

As I write the thought comes into my head to tell of the different impressions my dances have made, and the resulting criticism.

One of the objections I have encountered and one that I would love to overcome, is that of kind Archdeacon Sinclair. Although he has not seen my portrayal, he was quite shocked at the thought of dragging Salome from the pages of the Bible and flaunting her crime before the public. He seemed to think the use of the head of John the Baptist, the forerunner of our Saviour, was irreverent and unnecessary. Accordingly, one afternoon I went to see him at the Chapter House and I shall never forget his kindness and courtesy. His gravity and dignity impressed me greatly. I immediately realised that if I could only impress him with the genuineness of my work, to say nothing of converting him to my idea of the dance, I should be more than satisfied. "I am pleased to see you," he said, and I bowed my thanks as gravely as he had spoken.

Appreciating that his kindness was great in seeing me at all, I did not waste time by explaining much of the preliminaries.

"I hear that you object to my 'Vision of Salomé.' I have come, knowing you would be just enough to tell me why."

"So I will, and do not for a moment think that I have at any time said that your work is not artistic, for I am sure from all I hear and have read that it is, and from your manner I should judge both you and your work quite serious, but," he continued, "I feel there are Christians in my flock who may be repulsed at the thought of Christ's forerunner being made the subject of a scene for the stage. Or, for that matter, any Biblical story being put on the stage. I felt it my duty to pass this criticism upon this one number of your programme."

I explained my views and he listened so kindly that it would have been an extreme pleasure to me to have given in to his way of thinking immediately, had it been in my power to do so.

But we parted friends—good friends, and I am happy—as happy almost as though his thoughts were in absolute accordance with my own on this subject. Not long afterwards I had the great pleasure of attending service at beautiful St. Paul's, and of being, together with my parents, his guests at the Chapter House to tea, and then I met his charming sister and many of his dearest friends.

I have received numberless letters from the great to the low in your land, dear reader, and I can truthfully say that not one in a hundred has ever been other than full of appreciation of my efforts. Appreciation, well meant suggestions and criticisms, but always kind. Numerous begging letters, too, reach me, with every post. Each writer seems to think he or she alone is asking my assistance—would I could help all the really needy ones, but, believe me, it would be impossible. It is curious they should call upon me, a stranger in their city, terming me as “the only one in the whole world I can call upon.” London is so full of charities, more than any other city I know of. Surely, many of my letter writers would be assisted if they would lay their troubles as plainly before these good people as they do before me.

The one letter out of every hundred has always been an anonymous one and, perchance, a nasty one. However, these have never had the effect upon me the writers intended them to have, as, to me, only those who feel they can defend their stand if drawn into controversy, and be true to their conviction, are worthy of consideration. An anonymous letter writer is, to my mind, the lowest type of a coward, and therefore wholly beneath my notice.

Here is a typical begging letter:—

June 18th, 1908.

DEAR MADAM,—I am in such desperate need of £30 to keep my home together, will you give it to me on just the chance that I may be able to return it to you in three months from now? If you will give an address, I am sure I can. My reasons are many for writing to you, but I cannot explain them. Would you call and see me, if at all possible, or may I see you?

Yours sincerely,

I. H. B.

Then, again, all the "dearest pets," moneys, parrots; in short, all sorts of animals, have been urged on me for sale by their fond possessors. A snake charmer even conceived the idea of my perhaps caring for his snakes.

March 10th, 1908.

DEAR MISS ALLAN,—I am writing you to know whether you have ever thought of using snakes or pythons as an adjunct to your Oriental dances. You need not necessarily come in contact with them yourself, so there would not be the smallest danger. If you are at all interested in the idea, I should be pleased to discuss the matter with you, when we might come to some arrangement. I would undertake to manage the snakes, as I have been used to handling them. I have had the idea in my mind but have never thought of carrying it out before. It would certainly make a unique background for a dance..

Yours truly,

R. H.

But I have many compensations for my efforts and take pleasure in giving my reader a few letters of commendation and appreciation. A clergyman remembers me on August 29th with the following lines:—

August 29th. Beheading of S. John Baptist.

"Whosoever will lose his life for My sake shall find it." The commemoration of the beheading of S. John Baptist to-day, made me remember you and constrains me to thank you for the pleasure and inspiration that your perfect gift has offered to me—and to so many others."

Another of London's Church dignitaries writes me:—

June 24th, 1908.

MADAM,—In your wonderful dances this evening I have seen poems of motion more beautiful and entrancing than anything else I have ever beheld. I am a country clergyman who lives among beautiful things, and loves beautiful things; so this must be my apology for writing to you.

I know that some people have acted in a way that must have

caused you pain, and so I write to tell you that the Rector of an English Parish, far away from towns, will always think of you as one who has made the beautiful world more beautiful and given pure joy to others. I leave London on Friday, but great hope to see you dance before I go, for I have never seen such dancing as yours, and it is the only dancing I greatly care to see again.

—. —. —.

Still another, and one known and honoured by almost every Churchman in London.

August 7th, 1908.

DEAR MISS ALLAN,—I beg to thank you for your thoughtful reply; alas, I fear the artistic eye is lacking in many of us.

St. John the Baptist is a sort of patron Saint to mission spirited folk, and his martyrdom moves the depths of our being. Oberammergau is not allowed in England, and if you knew the deep religious fervour of its peasants, you would understand why they will not perform away from their native surroundings.

I rejoice in your high ideals and pray that you may ever be protected from what would lower them.

Sincerely yours,

Then a tiny girlie tells me, in her own little way:

MY DEAR MISS MAUD ALLAN,—Mother took me to sea you Danc and I think you Danc most beautiful and I Should like to sea you agane and I Do an eastern Danc it is like one of the Dances you do and you a long Dres and a gold crown and gold langlers and I am 8 years old and I am 9 in octobes and I hope I will be able to sea you Danc a gane and good by with love from Queenie H——, and I hope you will understand my wrighting, x x x x x x.

One of your greatest sculptors whose works I have always admired wrote me the following kind letter:

July 8th, 1908.

To Miss Maud Allan,

As one who has studied Greek Art for forty years, and more especially the Art of sculpture, I hope that you will permit me to express what great delight your performance of Classical Dances has given this afternoon. I am unable to resist the impulse to write and thank you for the exquisite pleasure, which the greatest art alone can give.

I had heard much praise from a brother Academician, but you have surpassed it. You have, I think, the proud position of being the greatest living exponent of Greek Art.

In all sincerity yours,

R. T.

Is it any wonder I feel happy? It is my one ambition to become from day to day more perfect in the art I have chosen, and such words of praise as the above will help and guide me.

Still another very charming and sincere letter reached me on

July 16th, 1908.

DEAR MADAM,—I should be ungrateful if I did not try to express my appreciation of thy art.

I am a Quaker and had never before visited a theatre, but from my early years I have been devoted to Greek Art—as when working all day in the British Museum library I used ever to turn for refreshment to the Parthenon Marbles. So after reading thy article in the *London Magazine* I came to see thee and certainly thou reached my ideal, which is saying much—the joy of thy Spring dance conveyed itself in a way that astonished me. I had expected to be charmed, but I may add as an unlooked for result, that a trouble I had had with bad thoughts and ugly imaginations has disappeared since seeing thee.

As the devil could not stay in the presence of our Lord, so no bad thought can stand before a good woman, if she had the power of expressing her nature. Thy art gives thee this power in an unequalled degree. One is impressed just as one is by Greek sculpture, only that a living being is vastly more expressive than marble. When as a tour de force thou shows *Salomé*, I cannot doubt that I was still more impressed by thy own character—thy rendering—for whatever else an artist depicts he

depicts himself. How can a man be concealed! says Emerson, and having this great gift of expression mayest thou ever faithfully guard the God Whose temple thou art. How shall they worship Her whom they have not seen and how shall they see without an artist?

A woman is to a man the shrine where the Highest is visibly manifested, and her beauty of form when expressing beauty within, can drive the evil out of him quicker than anything else in the world—excepting love itself. When in the Greek story, Hera appeared to Jason and Pallas to Perseus, we cannot suppose that they impaired their power by superfluous attire. And this perception of clothing as a hindrance was, I believe, no mere survival from the world's youth, but a special gift to the Greek's and prophetic of what mankind will eventually arrive at.

The place where one first sees a woman counts for something. For me it was by a lake in the high Alps, in whose dark water she and the dazzling snow of the mountain were mirrored. I had almost a fear of her, but she had none of me, and looking round on the solitary rocks she said she loved to be naked. Like Wordsworth's Lucy, my wife, though brought up as a Puritan, was nature's child, and as such and as an artist, would have been delighted with thee.

The hearts of men that fondly here admire fair seeming shows, may lift themselves up higher and learn to love with zealous duty the eternal fountain of that heavenly beauty.

Thine sincerely,

Lastly, I give to your notice an extremely illumined letter and one which interested me greatly:

June 25th, 1908.

MADAM,—I am so much struck by the power and passion you display in your “Vision of Salomé” that I am venturing to enclose a few notes on the historical personage which may or may not be of use to you. I have seen you more than once, and each time I have been perplexed as to the meaning of the Dance. You seem to interpret it as the triumph of the wildest passion, the intoxication of the power of beauty, revulsion at the crime

and fascination for the ghastly evidence of it. In this you portray the *Salomé* of opera, but my studies have, aided by your performance, led me to understand the *Salomé* of History.

Possibly you may know what I am trying to explain, but I think I can put some parts of the story in a new light.

The family of Herod was one of the most remarkable in antiquity. They numbered many men of genius and all the women we know of were remarkably gifted with brain and beauty. Despite the Biblical notices (very scanty) and the artistic representation of the Herods, there were two conspicuous features in the entire race—(1) deep affection liable to be succeeded by fits of hatred and generally remorse; (2) a certain magnanimity. Herod the great showed this later in his manly speech to Augustus after the battle of Actium; so did his great grand-daughter Bernice, when she risked her life to save the Jews from massacre. So did Herodias, when her husband received sentence of banishment from the Emperor, and she was pardoned. She said, "Thou indeed, O Emperor! actest after a magnificent manner and as becomest thyself in that which thou offerest me; but the kindest which I have for my husband hinders me from partaking of the favour of thy gift; for it is not just that I who have been a partner in his prosperity should forsake him in his misfortunes." For this she was sent penniless into exile. They were a wicked race, but they never lacked a certain grandeur. Even Heridos, the unfaithful wife of her first husband, could prove loyal to the man she loved. Now *Salomé* was her daughter, and, according to one reading of St. Mark (? adopted) of Herod, before whom she danced. She was his heiress (he had no son) and his promise to give her what she wished was not unnatural. In fact, I believe that St. Mark's story is genuine history. Let me just set it before you. Herod arrested John, but was attracted by his teaching; he kept him in prison to have his life. He often, however, conferred with him and was much perplexed what to do (this is the correct rendering). That is, he was uncertain whether he would dismiss Herodias and take back his lawful wife or not. This would have meant ruin to *Salomé*'s mother. Now what happened is capable of a twofold explanation.

Either *Salome* was a child. The little Princess danced and

so delighted her adopted father that he bade her ask a favour. For this case the tragedy of the Baptist dying at the request of a child who hardly knew what it meant is indeed a terrible one and the name "Vision" is an apt one, as Salomé may see as a woman the part she enacted as a child.

Or, Salomé consented to dance to save her mother when she was a grown woman. In this case it was an act of heroism and there would be a mingling of shame at the Princess thus condescending, the purpose shown in the intensity of the barbaric dance the triumph of her beauty, terror at the crime, madness and collapse.

This you portray in your wonderful performance. In the opera I believe, and certainly in Oscar Wilde's play, Herod is represented as a lustful tyrant, and Salomé as enamoured of the Baptist, but the story as we have it is in a far nobler key.

Pray, do not think that I wish to suggest improvements. Your genius alone must be your guide. But every notice of you I have read describes you as a student, and my sole excuse in writing is to put before you a side you may have overlooked, namely, that the possibilities of the true story are far better for a tragic presentation of the dance than the operatic version, which is, I am bound to say, in a measure justified by the interpretation put upon the passage in St. Mark's by all the commentators. But I must not weary you with details, even if you have troubled to read thus far. My only excuse for troubling you is my admiration for the artistic perfection of your work.

Yours faithfully,

DR. _____.

So, dear reader, those who have written me and criticised me in a spirit of friendliness and otherwise, I say to them all, I have not taken offence; for, as the leaves of the forest differ one from the other, so human minds, individual and critical, must look upon every question in life as each conscience and soul dictates. And for all the beautiful letters of praise and appreciation for my humble efforts to revive an Art—beautiful in its origin—and for hundreds of years lost to us, I thank the writers one and all most gratefully.

CHAPTER X.

A WORD ABOUT WOMEN.

Another letter interested me sincerely. It was intended to be a reply to my remark, "Women should influence rather than dictate." It read as follows:

"DEAR MADAM,—In the interesting account you wrote for the *Daily Mail* of your impressions of England, you say, 'I have been to the House of Commons, but not as a Suffragette, as I think a woman should influence rather than dictate.' May I, as one of the militant suffragists, explain that our policy is not to dictate but to fulfil our duties and responsibilities in the world in which we find ourselves? At the present time we are not allowed to do this. We have to live under and obey laws in which we have had no voice, and many of these laws are most unfair to women, and some of us feel this keenly, not for ourselves but for others. The divorce laws, the laws relating to children, and the unprotected lives of young girls. (In this country the age of consent is only sixteen. A girl at that age is a mere child.) We are taxed, yet not allowed to say at all how the money is to be spent. All through life women are being unfairly exploited and are refused the only weapon left in modern civilisations—that of the vote. We want to take our share in these duties, and in no way to dictate to the men; only to stop them dictating to us.

You are too busy, I expect, to come to the office to hear for yourself. We are at home every Thursday afternoon, or at other times by appointment.

"I am sorry I have not seen your dancing, but this work absorbs nearly all my time, or I should certainly have come, as I am very fond of dancing and watching it.

"Yours faithfully,
"E. H. M."

It is with some little diffidence—quite a different thing from reluctance—that I set out my views on certain questions con-

nected with my sex. Although I have thought over them deeply and often, I yet rather shrink from obtruding them upon the notice of a public who have been so kind to me when, in the exercise of my art, I have endeavoured to depict emotions excited by beautiful music.

As regards the question of votes for women, I believe that a woman can do more from an elevated position in the world of art, by bringing all that makes home beautiful into her husband's and children's lives, than she could by casting a dozen votes before the time is ready. However, I do not want to take up my small remaining space to discuss a question that might fill volumes, and then be only half thrashed out. I suppose every woman has to make her own bed, and as she makes it, so will she have to lie upon it. I am glad I don't have to sleep on beds of other people's making, especially our modern English Suffragettes. I should be a very unhappy girl. Even the above letter, with its praise at the end, has not convinced me that the vote is at present necessary.

Not for anything in the world would I have my anxious suffragist sister think that I do not believe in women being as highly educated as men are, for I do. I don't believe it is possible for a woman or a man to have too much education and refinement, which, by the way, is the very essence of education as I look upon it. But breaking windows and throwing stones will not bring a woman what she wants and needs, for, just as surely as the colleges were opened to a woman, so will the ballot be given her when she is ready to receive it.

Women should beware that they do not pay too much attention to mere instruction and yet pass by the demands of the real and truer education.

For some time I have been keenly interested in the question of woman's education, being strongly of opinion that there should be no difference at all between the sexes in this respect. I have no desire to dabble in psychology and discuss whether there is or is not any basic difference between the male and female intellect. If there is such a difference, it will be manifested rather in the creative and originative faculties than in the acquisitive. Where study is concerned, actual results have shown that, even with the limitations imposed

upon woman, she can hold her own.

For a woman is a human being, and has an absolute right to the fullest development of her mental faculties. All the treasures of science and literature should be open to her exactly as to her brother. Whatever advantage he gains by the highest education, she gains also; and whether one considers her as an independent unit or as the companion and comrade of man, nothing but benefit to the whole human race can accrue from the mental cultivation of woman. Nothing but harm and arrested development can come from treating the education of one-half the human race as relatively unimportant.

It is because her education has been neglected, rather than because of any natural difference, that woman has, for so many, become accepted as intellectually inferior to man. Our University records, since women have been admitted to their studies and examinations, do not bear out any notion of inferiority. Was not Miss Fawcett placed above the Senior Wrangler? And mathematics, I take it, is not exactly the subject one would have expected a woman to shine in. Then there have been Senior Classics, and all sorts of distinctions in every branch of learning.

Which reminds me that Oxford and Cambridge, although they admit women to the examinations, and record the place they have won, do not permit them to take the degrees that fall to the share of a man passing the same examinations. What possible excuse can there be for such a line of conduct as that? I suppose it is traceable to the old-fashioned prejudice against the higher education of women which still lingers in quarters where something better might have been expected. Anyhow, it is good to know that London and some of the younger Universities place their women students on the same footing as men in all respects.

Nor is it only the Universities and other higher educational institutions that are concerned. Parents are equally interested. At present, it is the exception to find parents who deem it as much their duty to give their girls the very best available education precisely as they do their boys. Most people appear to regard a quite inferior standard as quite good enough for their daughters. Even if facilities were the same, many would not take advantage of them. I suppose it

is a case of action and reaction. The lesser facilities probably render many parents indifferent; the indifference of many parents in turn checks progress, and retards movement in the forward direction.

Perhaps I had better say at once that I am sufficiently old fashioned to believe that the rightful destiny of every woman is to be the wife and mother, to make that inner sanctuary known by the sweet name of "home." And it is just because I believe she cannot be a real wife to her husband, or a real mother to her children—in the best and highest sense—unless she is intellectually and educationally on a level with them; that I am so earnest an advocate of the removal of every obstacle, whether due to law or custom, that stands in the way of woman's education.

At the same time one must recognise, with some sadness, for many reasons, among which the preponderance of the female element in the population of most civilised countries is one of the foremost, that not to every woman can happy wifehood and motherhood fall. Many women must be their own bread winners and stand alone. The avenues of employment will be widened by better female education.

Therefore, the more professions and avocations that are opened up for us women the better. Particularly do I think women should be doctors. In so many cases they possess an intuitive perception of the pains of their own sex, which a man doctor cannot possibly be expected to possess, that their advice and sympathy—the latter is not to be overlooked as a curative element—are invaluable. Yet I must candidly confess that, when it comes to surgery, I think men are more reliable. At any rate, if I had the misfortune to have to undergo an operation, I feel that I should experience a greater sense of security with a male operator. I may be wrong, for such ideas are matters of feeling rather than of thought.

I am less certain as to whether it is desirable the legal profession should be thrown open to members of my sex. I am not doubting their intellectual qualifications, or that they could master the subject. The existence of lady barristers in France disposes of any query on that score. But temperament counts as well as intellect. We women are swayed still by our emotions to a greater extent than men;

and while, now and then, this might benefit a client, on the whole I am inclined to the view that there would be an absence of that dispassionate weighing of pros and cons, that impersonal consideration of all that told against a client as well as in his favour, without which a legal adviser will probably do more harm than good.

Moreover, I take it that if women were admitted to the Bar, they could not be debarred from the Bench. Now, if the natural inclination of my sex to take a side and brush aside objections would prove disadvantageous in the practice of advocacy, in the case of a Judge it would be absolutely fatal. Careful weighing of evidence, exhaustive analysis free from emotional bias, is antagonistic to our instincts. Of course, I am speaking in general terms. Just as there are feminine men, there are masculine women; there is something feminine in every man, something masculine in every woman. But one cannot legislate for exceptions; and, broadly stated, I believe the facts are as I have ventured to put them.

I candidly admit that the differences upon which I have insisted may be due to long generations of training and environment. It may well be that, in years to come, when the improved education of women has become more general, when the greater freedom of their mode of life, with the accompanying broadening of mental outlook, has wrought changes, these differences may be modified. When that time comes, the whole aspect of the problem may be altered. But to-day, with woman's nature what it is, I think the legal profession unsuited to my sex.

For precisely the same reason, I fear that I must rank myself among those who do not believe it desirable that women should exercise the franchise. Man has been defined as a political animal. Woman is not. The ordinary working man, when his day's work is done, will discuss politics with his fellows, will read political articles in his newspaper. His wife will chat over dress, or housekeeping, or gossip about her neighbours. If she reads, it will probably be some serial story in a newspaper, dealing mostly with love. It is an open secret that the adoption of the feuilleton of late years in so many English newspapers is primarily designed to furnish reading for the female members of the family. I don't see how statistics are to be got on this topic, but I feel confident

that if they were procurable they would show that the majority of the men who take any particular newspaper do not read the serial story, while the majority of the women do.

At bottom this points to a genuine sex difference. Whether it is Nature or education that is responsible need not concern us now, although it may affect the future. The main thing is that it exists, and it is this: Men care more for principles, women for persons.

You may say this is generalising. It is; but I think it is a generalisation whose accuracy will be conceded. The personal characteristics of a candidate would undoubtedly weigh unduly with women. His looks, his manner, his bearing, would interest them far more than his views. I have, in the course of my life and in the practice of my profession, met women of many countries and many classes, and my experience tends to confirm me in the view that, broadly speaking, women care little or nothing for abstract questions. Their thoughts and their conversation are directed to persons.

That is why they are so unsuited to politics, in my opinion. I shall be extremely sorry if my frankness offends anyone, but I feel bound to utter my genuine thoughts, even if in so doing I fail to please many of my own sex, for whose intellect, character, and achievements I have the highest respect, the profoundest admiration. Woman should be the refining, the inspiring, the idealising element of humanity. In becoming a good politician she would cease to be that.

Needless to add, perhaps, that even if I thought the franchise for women desirable, I do not view the tactics adopted by some of its advocates with approval. It seems to me they are calculated to damage rather than to further the cause; above all, to depart from that refining ideal which woman should maintain. To have set up a rival platform to Mr. Winston Churchill, for instance; to have made a speech so much more interesting than his, that it would have depleted his audience and left him talking to empty benches, would have been legitimate and a handsome way of opposing him. To clang a bell so that he could not be heard is mere rowdyism, and unworthy.

In conclusion, I should like to say that men have in the past, step by step, removed many of the obstacles that have stood in the way of woman's freedom. Our condition has

changed immeasurably for the better, as witness the educational question on which my heart is set. Much yet remains to be done, and men will do it. For, after all, no man is free from the influence of some woman. The careers of the greatest men prove it. As wives, mothers, sisters, daughters, they more or less mould husbands, sons, brothers, and fathers. For children do modify parents, as parents do children. The pity is that in so many instances that influence has not been of the right kind. The general raising of the standard of women's education should remedy that; and, with woman swaying man to nobler and loftier ideals, the world will move to higher things, and humanity progress nearer divinity.



CHAPTER XI.

LONDON.

I cannot say that my first impression of the city was the happiest of any I had ever had, although I was coming into an undiscovered country of which I had dreamed, and which I longed to conquer.

The crossing of the Channel was almost more than I could bear. At no time on the great ocean had I ever suffered as I did then! And then, too, the day was Sunday, and it was so wet, for the rain was coming down in torrents.

As we drove from the station, I saw looming up against the dark sky a huge building—Buckingham Palace—“where the King lives,” I whispered, and I felt a thrill as if I were at home, for I certainly had one friend in this great city of rain and darkness.

When I was at the High School in California I first read that beautiful poem beginning, “Oh, to be in England now that April’s there!” and ever since, when studying music under Ferruccio Busoni, or when wandering in the picture galleries and churches of Italy, I have had the same aspirations as Browning. And here am I in England—already seven whole months—April has come and gone, and still I wonder what I think of it.

The stillness in London as compared to other big cities is very restful. You must not think that I mean by this that London is slow and sleepy—quite the reverse. Berlin is up all night; in Vienna the cafés have not shut their doors for years; in New York the crowds of people all seem to be making unnecessary noise. As compared with these, London is alive, a delightful fair, full of merry-go-rounds without the steam organ. But can anyone tell me why the streets are made as smooth as the floors of ball-rooms for the horses, and every stone in your pavements in the West End is constructed like a small basin?

And the people! It would be against my nature not to love the fine, gallant well-dressed straight-forward English-

man—but the women I may be supposed to look on with a critical, cat-like eye. To me they are the most wonderful feature of lovely London. Never have I seen so many except in San Francisco—as adorn the streets of the West End, a huge aviary, all in brilliant plumage and all young, looking for all the world like a pretty chorus, with bright eyes, rosebud mouths, and pink complexions set in a frame of fluffy hair. Mothers and daughters of the great, and the work girls—non Angli, sed Angeli—“Not Angles, but Angels,” as the Roman Emperor said—they are all the same.

Nowhere in the world does a woman of birth carry herself so distinctively as in England.

And your Sundays. I have seen your Day of Rest sneered at; I have heard the Continental Sunday lauded. I have lived longed enough on the Continent, however, to see this one day cruelly abused, and appreciate deeply the quiet and peace of an English Sunday. I have not seen much of England yet. I was too ill on coming and was as white as your chalk cliffs, and, therefore, could hardly appreciate my run through the Garden of England. I must go again to see the hop poles tied up with green ribbons, and your blossomed pear tree in the hedge lean to the field and scatter on the clover, blossoms and dewdrops, but I have seen enough to love your peaceful Sunday and its evening bells.

When I came to London I was known only to a few Londoners who perhaps had seen me on the Continent, or heard of me when I danced before His Majesty at Marienbad. I felt as though I were about to turn a sharp corner in my career, one which meant so much to me—to my art and to its future. Would I be received, would my efforts meet with approval—English approval? If I live to be the age of Methuselah, I shall never forget my first performance on March 6th, 1908, at the Palace Theatre. Never before had I been so tempted to gaze for one satisfying moment at my audience. It meant so much for the Press to speak for my art, born of my great passionate love for the beautiful: but perhaps it was nervousness, perhaps the silent house sitting in darkness, at any rate I couldn’t tell whether there were twenty people or two hundred there. Then, in a desire to forget, I placed my mind on my work and slipping from behind the softly hanging curtains which formed my background, danced my

way into the heart of London. I was so happy! And now the golden gates of all the cities of the earth are open to me. I say this in very humble and in deep gratitude, and because I owe it to you dear Londoners, I would be unworthy if I did not make acknowledgment.

To Mr. Alfred Butt, Managing Director of the Palace, I owe the greatest debt of thanks, for his full realisation of the value of a judicious management of an artiste, with an Art so foreign to anything yet brought to the notice of the English public, has proven of infinite value to me, and I shall ever be grateful and deeply indebted to him.

Speaking of Mr. Butt, I may as well tell you how I once hurt his feelings almost beyond redemption. When I called at the Palace on the day after my arrival at twelve o'clock—with sack and pack as the Germans say—I asked of Blake, the stage door keeper, to be shown to Mr. Butt, the Managing Director. Blake seemed to think I wanted a lot.

“Mr. Butt is engaged, Miss. Can’t see him.”

“So,” I thought, “a pretty time of day if I’m to wait in the hall way till dear knows when,” so I conceived the idea of insisting upon my card being sent up. A telephone message—

“Go up to the office, Miss; I’ll take you up in the lift. Mr. Butt’ll see you soon.”

I got as far as the top and a clatter of typewriting machines told me I was nearing busy offices. Again—

“You’ll have to wait a while, Miss.” So down I sat on a bench in the hall and waited—waited. Suddenly a door opened—a voice called “Miss Allan?” I jumped; I had fallen into a reverie and was away off in Fairyland! When I entered, a tall, slight, fair-haired young man stood before me, I gazed a few seconds, perplexed—looked about me as he made no move to go and call Mr. Butt to see if I had perhaps overlooked the Director!

“Will you kindly call Mr. Butt?” I remarked.

“Who?”

“Mr. Butt.” His clear blue eyes twinkled and his whole face lighted up with a smile so wicked that I felt for one moment horribly annoyed. How dare this man act in such a manner?

Suddenly I felt I was making a mistake. This man could

be none other than Mr. Butt himself! I gasped out my suspicion, and yes—it was true. I had thought him one of his clerks. Can you image his amusement? But how could I know he would be so young? He did forgive me, and soon too, and now I count him as my true friend; and the Palace Theatre in which I have spent many happy months, and won the sympathetic applause of thousands, my London home!

* * * * *

ENGLAND'S QUEEN.

I used to think when I was a student that if I could dance before and receive the gracious applause of the King and Queen, I should be the happiest girl in the world, and now that it has really happened, I think sometimes it must all be a dream.

How plainly it all comes back to me! How clearly I seem to hear Her Majesty's voice as taking hold of my hand she said:—

“How beautiful your dancing is. It has given me real delight.”

It all happened one night after my usual appearance at the theatre. It was after a dinner given in honour of Their Majesties by the Earl and Countess of Dudley.

The beautiful ball-room, in its white and gold splendour, was radiant with beautiful women and sparkling gems. One end had been reserved for me, and with a background of masses of Smilax and La France roses, I felt as though I had been transported to Fairyland! I looked with quivering heart and tears in my eyes at all the wondrous beauty of my surroundings, and calling upon the fairies to support and guide me—danced as I have never danced before! When I had finished I saw the King and Queen applauding—I grew dizzy with joy, and I could have kissed the hem of her garment. When Lady Dudley came to me with a message that the Queen would receive me, London held at that moment no happier girl—England's Queen, ever young, ever charitable, had recognised my efforts to give something beautiful to the world, and I was now to hear it from her own dear lips. I have heard it and rejoice!

CHAPTER XII.

SALOME.

I.—The Dance of Salomé.

II.—The Vision of Salomé.

I am glad that I have been asked to write this little book for the reason, if for none other, that it gives me an opportunity to explain what is the meaning that I wish to convey by my dance, "The Vision of Salomé," a meaning that has been dimly guessed by some, hinted at by others, and perhaps more widely misunderstood by what in Jacobean times were called "the groundlings" than any dance in my collection.

I.—This is the Dance of Salomé.

I want you to see, as I can, in imagination or memory, those apartments in the palace of Herod Antipas, by the will of his father, Herod the Great, the late Procurator of Judæa, Tetrarch of Galilee and Perea, set apart especially for the use of the Princess Salomé, daughter of Herodias and grand-daughter of the late Procurator. You see the sombre splendour of those pillared halls, strewn with rare draperies and Tyrian purple—the sumptuous couches to the decoration of which all Arabia had contributed her embroideries. Amid them the Princess Salomé, hardly more than a child—fourteen I take her to have been—surrounded by the Galilean maidens who were her attendants, her playmates, and her slaves. Little she recked that these painted and embroidered stuffs were part of the marriage portion of her aunt, the daughter of Aretas, King and Lord of Arabia-Petraea, whom her uncle, the Tetrarch, has put away from his that he might marry her mother, Herodias. I want you to try and realise what her life must have been, cloistered at the dawn of womanhood in the luxurious seclusion of an Oriental Princess. Did any thought of her father, Philip, haunt her mind? How long was it since she had known what it was to be petted by the father to whom she had been but an exquisite plaything? The memory of childhood is, thank Heaven, short for such things, and the luxury of her uncle's house had become part of her life, part of herself.

Only amid the soft glamour of her days had one harsh perplexing note jarred upon the harmony of her existence. Hardly had she become accustomed to her new surroundings, hardly become reconciled to calling Herod Antipas by the dearer name of 'father,' when she witnessed one never-to-be-forgottn day, the fury of her mother, the impotent rage that made her attendants, both male and female, cower before her—and in her own apartments the girls whispered, half fearful of being overheard and of being whipped—that this new luxury that surrounded her, nay, her very presence in the palace itself had been denounced, that the vengeance of Almighty God had been invoked upon her mother by the voice of "one crying in the wilderness;" that the new marriage of her step-father had been lashed with the denunciations of the Baptist John—John, who had called with clarion voice the people of the land to the consecrating waters of the river Jordan. Can you not hear the frightened speculations of the little maidens behind the curtains of their hanging garden upon the palace roof?

The Princess Salomé sat surrounded by the maidens, their pastimes interrupted now and again by a burst of sound from the great halls of the palace far below them. It was the birthday of the all-powerful Tetrarch, and Herod "made a supper to his lords, high captains, and chief estates of Galilee."

Suddenly the gong that hung at the entrance to her private abode reverberates with a great clang! A Nubian slave crouches before her—bidden to speak he delivers himself of the message that half terrifies and half enchants her. Remember, she was only a child. She must tire herself in the jewelled robes and delicate fabrics which are hers of right as a Princess of the Royal house, and repair to the great hall, where she shall dance before the "lords, high captains and chief estates of Galilee." This gift has come down to her, brought by them from Egypt, from the earliest settlers of the land whom she claims as her ancestors. It has been her pride, her mother's delight, the pleasure of her dead father in days gone by, and now of the great Tetrarch himself. He has spoken to his guests of the Egyptian wizardries of her dance, she must not shame his words. To hear is to obey.

The rude, plaintive, cadences of the native musicians restore her faltering confidence as she springs into the great hall;

blind to the circle of inflamed eyes that devour her youthful beauty, she sees only Herod himself and at his side his sister-in-law and wife—Herodias, her mother. For them and for them alone she weaves her most ingenious witcheries of dance. The hall grows filled with silence, a spell has come over the semi-barbarians assembled to do honour to the festival of the Tetrarch, and it has fallen most heavily upon the Tetrarch himself.

The music dies away in a wail of passion. The little figure lies panting in obeisance before the throne. And the great ruler leaning forward speaks with dull eyes and parched tongue:—

“Ask of me whatsoever thou wilt and I will give it thee!”

She raises her hand above her bowed head in deprecation of so great a promise.

“Whatsoever thou wilt ask of me,” he pants, “I swear that I will give it thee, unto the half of my kingdom.”

Then dazed, frightened by she knows not what, that flames suddenly from the eyes of Herod, she takes refuge in her mother’s bosom.

“What shall I ask” she whispers.

And on the instant her mother replies—personal hate overcoming all other feelings or ambitions—“The head of John the Baptist.”

Once more she bends, Royal Princess though she be, before the throne of Herod.

“I will that thou give me, by and by in a charger, the head of John the Baptist.”

“How can we tell what happened then in more pregnant words than those of the Evangelist Mark?

“And the king was exceeding sorry, yet for his oath’s sake and for their sakes which sat with him he would not reject her.

“And immediately the king sent an executioner and commanded his head to be brought; and he went and beheaded him in prison.

“And brought his head in a charger and gave it to the damsel, and the damsel gave it to her mother.”

Think of the terror of that moment to the child. She had heard of John as of a great good man who preached purity and

higher things than she had ever known in the debasing luxuries of the court. Buoyed up by the excitement of her triumph she had put the ghastly trophy of her skill into the hands of her mother.

Then she had fled, on naked, horror-stricken feet, back to the terrace-garden of her apartments. With a terrified gesture the attendants have been dismissed. She stands panting, aghast, her hands pressed to her young breasts, she raises them and, bowing her head to meet them, sees upon her naked flesh, upon the hands that seek her smarting eyes, the purple, sticky stain that she has not been able to avoid—it is the blood of the Baptist John.

The sight turns her for a moment to stone. Then it brings the whole ghastly scene back, as in a vision.

II.—This is my Vision of Salomé.

Drawn by an irresistible force Salomé in a dream descends the marble steps leading from the bronze doors that she has just flung to behind her frightened attendants. The same stone obelisk backed by the inky darkness of the cypress trees shut out the silver rays of the moon and save for the flickering red light of the cresset flames that the slaves have lit, all is mystic darkness, and to Salomé's overwrought brain all is fantastic, vague.

She lives again the awful moments of joy and of horror which she has just passed through. Alone in the gloom the poor child's fancy assumes dominion over her.

Slowly to the strains of the distant music, reminiscently she raises her willowy arms. The movement thrills her whole slender frame and she glides as if in a dream. A voice whispers "You duty—your duty! Does not the child owe obedience to its mother?" On, on—wilder and more reckless than ever before! She sees once more the greedy glittering eyes of her stepfather—she hears again the whispered praises and encouraging words of her mother, and Salomé, child that she is, realises a power within her and exults. She sees again her triumph approach, her swaying limbs are in readiness to give way when suddenly from out of the sombre death-still hall the wail of muffled distress—and a pale sublime face with its mass of long black hair arises before her—the head of John the Baptist! There is a sudden crash. She is horror stricken!

Suddenly a wild desire takes possession of her. Why, ah! why, should her mother have longed for this man's end? Salomé feels a strange longing compelling her once more to hold in her hands this awful reward of her obedience and slowly, very slowly, and with ecstasy mingled with dread, she seems to take up and to lay the vision of her prize on the floor before her. Every fibre of her youthful body is quivering; a sensation hitherto utterly unknown to her is awakened and her soul longs for comfort. Hark! a sound of approaching feet. Frightened lest her treasure be taken from her before she has solved its mystery she stands guard over it, and when the footsteps die away in the distant halls her relief knows no limit! In the mad whirl of childish joy she is drawn again to dance—dance around this strange silent presence. Soon exhaustion breaks the spell. Salomé, Princess of Galilee, lies prone on the cold grey marble.

The awakening is that of her childish heart. The realisation of a superior power has so taken possession of her that she is spurred on to sacrifice everything even unto herself to conquer. Reared in luxury her every wish granted since her days began—was it to be thought possible she would subject herself to the will of another, a stronger and an intangible force at that, without a fierce conflict?

What passes in those few moments through this excited, half-terror-stricken, half-stubborn brain makes of little Salomé a woman!

Instead of wanting now to conquer she wants to be conquered, wants the spiritual guidance of the man whose wraith is before her; but it remains silent! No word of comfort, not even a sign! Crazed by the rigid stillness, Salomé, seeking an understanding, and knowing not how to obtain it, presses her warm vibrating lips to the cold lifeless ones of the Baptist! In this instant the curtain of darkness that had enveloped her soul falls, the strange grandeur of a power higher than Salomé has ever dreamed of beholding becomes visible to her and her anguish becomes vibrant.

She begs and prays for mercy of the stern head—alas, without response! Salomé flees in despair, and though her pride, her princely rank confront her, and she halts, it is but for a moment. The Revelation of Something far greater still breaks

upon her, and stretching out her trembling arms turns her soul rejoicing towards Salvation. It is gone! Where, oh, where! A sudden wild grief overmasters her, and the fair young Princess, bereft of all her pride, her childish gaiety, and her womanly desire, falls, her hands grasping high above her for her lost redemption, a quivering huddled mass. It is the atonement of her mother's awful sin!

Many the silent centuries that have passed since this woeful happening. But throughout the peoples whose souls have awakened to the teaching of the Divine Nazarene, the anguish of this tale finds echo in human hearts, and night winds breathing over Syrian deserts whisper to the pitying stars the story of Salomé.

THE END.



